

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
JULY 1, 2013**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on July 1, 2013, 2:00 pm, Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Rd., Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman  
Doug Cody, Vice Chair  
Charles Elders, Commissioner  
Mark Jones, Commissioner  
Vicki Greene, Commissioner

Chuck Wooten, County Manager  
J. K. Coward, Jr., Co. Attorney  
Pat Parris, Clerk to Board

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

**AGENDA:** Chairman Debnam amended the Agenda by deleting Social Services Board Appointment, Closed Session and adding Tourism Development Authority Appointment. Commissioner Jones moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**MINUTES:** Commissioner Greene moved to approve the Minutes of the Work Session and Regular Meeting of June 17, 2013. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**WELL@WORK** is a wellness program for employees, by employees. The primary objective is to offer education, support and resources in a fun and relaxed atmosphere so that employees can obtain and maintain a healthier, more productive lifestyle that benefits themselves, their families and their community. The 39 employees were commended for their achievement in the program during the past fiscal year.

**(1) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:** Mr. Wooten reported:

**(a) Fire Tax Meeting:** Michael Forbis has coordinated a meeting with the local fire chiefs on July 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in the Heritage Room at the Senior Center to discuss a potential fire tax. This meeting will be an opportunity to present the details of implementing a fire tax in Jackson County. All fire departments have confirmed their participation except for Sylva who is having their officer installation dinner that evening. He has offered to make a similar presentation to the Sylva Fire Department.

**(b) Hwy 107 Connector:** NCDOT has announced that they will study various scenarios for improving traffic flow on NC 107 through Sylva. Further, they have indicated they will continue planning to improve existing NC 107 from NC 116 (Webster Road) to US 23 Business (Asheville Highway) in Sylva before continuing planning on the NC 107 Connector.

(c) **Recreation Advisory Board:** The recreation advisory board will meet on July 16<sup>th</sup> to review and discuss the proposed recreation master plan. If endorsed by the advisory board, the report should be available for discussion at the work session in August.

(d) **Tax Foreclosures:** Three parcels have gone through foreclosure and no bids were made when the properties were offered for sale. He plans to work with the County Attorney to determine the next steps for disposing of these properties.

(e) **Ledbetter Road- Requested Improvements:** He has received a petition from people living in the University Heights area asking that this road be included on the Jackson County transportation priorities list. This road will be the main source for access to the proposed student housing project that was discussed at the June work session. He will hold this information for consideration when the Commissioners are asked to submit the 2014 transportation priority list.

(f) **Economic Development:** The director's position has been advertised and applications will be reviewed next week. He plans to form a search committee to assist in this process and would welcome participation by a Commissioner. He will also include representatives from the Business and Industry Advisory Committee in this process.

## **(2) CONSENT AGENDA:**

(a) **Budget Amendments:** Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented four budget amendments.

(b) **July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks Display:** Tony Elders, presented a request from Cedar Creek Racquet Club to display fireworks on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Elders moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(3) **COUNTY EXTENSION UPDATE:** Rob Hawk, Executive Director, stated that a selection has been made for the Family Consumer Science agent position; however, the position is still on hold due to federal cut backs. Catherine Smith was employed on June 1<sup>st</sup> for the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program, a federal program, which is 100% funded by NC A&T University-Greensboro. The county supplies office use and space.

His office has received several calls concerning problems with wildlife:

(a) Beavers. The Beaver Management Assistance Program (BMAP) includes an annual \$4,000 payment to the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. These funds are used to contract with Ryan Williamson, USDA Wildlife Services. Landowners who request the use of BMAP services pay \$20 per visit. Over the winter, when beavers are active, he trapped several in the High Hampton area and Village Green Common area.

(b) Armadillos – a first for the Extension Office. Last week he received a call from a lady who lives off Whiteside Cove Road in Cashiers stating she has four armadillos in her yard. His research reveals the armadillos are moving north and east. As of 2011, they were on the Jackson/Macon/Georgia borders.

(c) Red Fox. Several calls were received this spring concerning red foxes. The problem appears to be that people like to domesticate them because they are cute. This is a disservice to other people and also to the red fox because they could interchange with pets and infect them with distemper or rabies.

The 4-H group is working very hard with all the summer camps. Christy Bredenkamp has been working closely this spring and summer with Christmas tree growers on pest management specifically with integrated pest management. She is trying to help growers to not only cut down on fertilizer costs but also herbicides and pesticides. She gave a Danish team a tour of the local Christmas tree industry sites.

**(4) TRANSIT DEPT.:** Chuck Norris, Transit Director, presented a proposal for a duel fuel conversion, gasoline and propane, of nine Transit vehicles:

**(a) Gasoline:** On a yearly basis Transit typically uses approximately 20,000 gallons of gasoline at an average cost \$3.00 per gallon and, based on the current year fuel consumption, would result in an estimated cost of \$60,000 annually.

**(b) Propane:** The duel fuel conversion would allow transit vehicles to be operated on either gasoline or propane. In order to take advantage of the conversion, it is necessary that the County enter into an agreement with Alliance Autogas for installation of equipment to convert nine vehicles and purchase propane. The lease agreement to convert the nine vehicles will cost a total of \$54,200 for a 36 month lease at which time the County will have the option to buy all the conversion equipment for \$1.00. Transit will pay an estimated \$200 per vehicle per month during the term of the lease for a yearly cost of \$2,400 per vehicle for a total annual cost of \$21,600. Propane averages \$1.70 per gallon but with a federal government incentive, Transit will receive reimbursement of \$.50 per gallon for using propane which would reduce the estimated cost to \$1.20 per gallon. The estimated fuel savings during the term of the lease is \$4,454 per year. The propane tank and fueling infrastructure will be installed at the Public Works facility in the vicinity of the current gasoline fueling station at no cost to the County. The cost of installing the equipment in the vehicles is included in the lease as well as any warranty issues that may arise during the lease period.

Mr. Coward stated he had not reviewed the contract.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Greene moved to approve the Lease Agreement with Alliance Autogas contingent upon approval by the County Attorney, Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(5) NCACC VOTING DELEGATE:** The 106<sup>th</sup> Annual NCACC Conference is scheduled in Guilford County on August 22-25.

***Motion:*** *Chairman Debnam moved to designate Commissioner Cody to serve as Jackson County's voting delegate at the NCACC Annual Conference. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote*

**(6) PARTF CONTRACT - GREENWAY:** Gerald Green, Planning Director, presented a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) Project Agreement for the Tuckasegee River Greenway. The total project cost is \$1,059,476 (\$435,000 PARTF grant, \$624,476 County match). The agreement period is 7/1/13 through 6/30/16. Other anticipated funding sources include a portion of the Duke FERC settlement funds and NCDOT.

NCDOT has committed to paying half the cost of relocating the NCDOT controlled access fence along the greenway route. Bid and contract documents for the greenway portion of the project have been prepared. Mr. Coward stated he has reviewed the contract and has questions regarding some of the wording.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Elders moved to approve the contract contingent upon approval by the County Attorney. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(7) SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS:** Gerald Green, Planning Director, presented proposed amendments to the open space section of the Subdivision Ordinance. The proposed standards provide for a range in the amount of open space to be dedicated with the amount increasing as the number of lots increases and provides for alternatives to the dedication of open space. The recommended revisions establish minimum criteria for the open space, a procedure for the dedication of the open space, and standards for the maintenance of the open space. Alternatives to providing open space include developing estate lots with a minimum lot size of 3 acres, providing a fee-in-lieu with the fee used to maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities or develop new ones, or providing land in another location as mitigation for the open space requirement. The Planning Board unanimously recommends adoption of amendments. A public hearing was held on July 1<sup>st</sup> at 1:40 p.m.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Greene moved to adopt the amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(8) WATER RECHARGE ORDINANCE:** Gerald Green, Planning Director, presented a proposed Water Recharge Ordinance. The ordinance permits the impervious surface limits to be exceeded if best management practices such as retention basins and rain gardens are used that will assure that storm water enters the groundwater system. The ordinance standards would apply to all new development. The Planning Board unanimously recommends adoption of the ordinance. A public hearing was held on July 1<sup>st</sup> at 1:50 p.m.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Jones moved to adopt a Water Recharge Ordinance. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(9) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:**

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Greene moved to appoint Robert Jumper to fill the unexpired term of Russ Seagle on the Tourism Development Authority Board. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(10) SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** The Macon County Board of Commissioners reappointed Melvin “Pete” Penland as a Macon County representative on the SCC Board of Trustees contingent upon approval by Jackson County.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Elders moved to confirm the reappointment of Melvin “Pete” Penland to a 4 year term on the SCC Board of Trustees. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(11) CULLOWHEE STEERING COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Greene recommended Myrtle Schrader, Commissioner Jones recommended Scott Baker, Commissioner Elders recommended Arnold Ashe, and Chairman Debnam recommended Jeff Brotherton. Commissioner Greene and Gerald Green, Planning Director, volunteered to serve. Carry over.

**Public Comments:**

(a) Marie Leatherwood of Sylva stated that the only place a turntable can be built is on the 1.79 acre parking lot owned by Al Harper (GSMR owner). Her research reveals that the property is currently mortgaged to Morgan Legacy for \$700,000 until August 1, 2021. A huge amount of tax money could be endangered if that first lien holder should foreclose. Ryan Sherby of the Southwestern Commission should not consider grants for a GSMR turntable until a full investigation of GSMR finances, grants, etc. takes place.

(b) T. J. Walker, owner and operator of the Dillsboro Inn, expressed appreciation for keeping a relationship with GSMR open and continuing to deliberate on the cost benefit/assessment of bringing the train back to Dillsboro. This issue and prospect has created and generated a lot of hope and promise to many struggling businesses, residents, and merchants not only in Dillsboro but also in Sylva. No other stimulus would create more exposure for the county, create more jobs throughout the county, and more importantly create hope and promise. Bringing in a fine German brewery to Dillsboro is contingent on the railroad returning. Further, it is a worthwhile idea to bring the Women’s Museum to Monteith Park and redevelop the park and house. These are stimulus programs for tourism related businesses throughout the county.

(c) Rose Ann Johnson stated that in September 2012 she purchased Bradley’s General Store in Dillsboro. During the month of June the train did not come during the first two weeks, but did in the second two. During those last two weeks, the train deposited over 1,300 individuals into Jackson County and the revenue at Bradley’s increased \$300 per day. Tourism is the primary industry and needs to be promoted as much as possible.

**Press Conference**

There being no further business, Commissioner Greene moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Attest:

Approved:

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Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

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W. J. Debnam, Chairman