

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2013**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on September 16, 2013, 6:00 pm, at the Cullowhee Fire Dept. Caney Fork Substation, 4201 Caney Fork Rd., Cullowhee, North Carolina.

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

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

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

**AGENDA:** Chairman Debnam amended the Agenda by adding Cullowhee Fire Department Property. Commissioner Greene moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**MINUTES:** Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 3, 2013. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(1) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Chairman Debnam reported that he attended a Work Force Development meeting last week and announced there is now a new virtual "one stop" for people who are unemployed and for those seeking employees. This method will help people in the future who are looking for jobs and also for people who are looking to hire. All the information will be available on line.

(2) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

(a) **Commissioner Greene** reported that Commissioner Cody and she were on WRGC this morning at 8:15 am. Mr. Burnette asked some good questions about progress in the county and things that the Commissioners are doing. It was time well spent.

(b) **Commissioner Jones** reported the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council will be having a food drive on October 10<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged everyone to bring nonperishable food to Room A227 at the Justice Center. This donation is for Project Challenge which helps youth in transition and is a great program. Cashiers will be sponsoring a USGA golf tournament all next week and admission is free.

(c) **Commissioner Elders** thanked everyone involved in setting up the facility for tonight's meeting. He extended an invitation for everyone to attend all Commissioner meetings on the first and third Mondays at the Justice Center.

(d) **Commissioner Cody** thanked the residents in the community for attending the meeting. There are a lot of positive things happening in the County that everyone should be proud of and progress is being made on retail sales.

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

**(a) Construction Tour and Luncheon:** Monteith Construction is hosting a cook-out at the Smoky Mountain High School job site on September 23<sup>rd</sup> beginning at 11:30 am. The luncheon is for all the construction workers to recognize the work they have done to date and to allow the School Board and Commissioners to tour the facility and get a better understanding of the project as well as the work remaining for completion.

**(b) County Property:** "For Sale" signs have been ordered and should be installed within the next few days on the old rescue squad building and the vacant lot on West Main Street and Wilkes Crescent. Hopefully, some interest will be generated and possibly identify a buyer who would bring a new business to the community and create some jobs.

**(c) AdvantageWest - Economic Development:** He attended a meeting on September 12<sup>th</sup> where Commerce Secretary Decker provided an update on the restructuring efforts for the NC Department of Commerce. Even though the bill outlining the steps of reorganization was not approved during the recent legislative session, they did receive authority and funding to move forward with the creation of the 501c3, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. Secretary Decker emphasized her commitment to providing assistance to rural North Carolina. Obviously, there is a great deal of concern among county economic development personnel with the elimination of the Rural Center and a 75% reduction in the state appropriation for AdvantageWest.

**(d) Storm Damage – Possible Funding:** The Board previously discussed the damage that occurred on the evening of July 3<sup>rd</sup> from a landslide in the Dick Creek area. There has been a substantial accumulation of debris that has formed a couple of debris dams that are restricting the normal flow of the creek. In addition, there appears to be a large amount of soil from the landslide that is being held back by these dams. Some residents have expressed concern; however, it is the opinion of emergency personnel that there is no eminent danger to the residents on this creek unless another large weather event or landslide takes place. There is some possibility that this clean-up might qualify for federal funds from the Emergency Watershed Protection program. If approved, a local government must serve as sponsor (banker) and the federal government will provide funding for 75% of the project. He requested permission to submit an application for these funds and for the County to serve as the sponsor for the grant as long as the residents provide the local 25% match. The County does not have funds in the budget for clean-up of these types of events. It should be noted that several residents have already cleaned up the creek that runs through their property and others are in the process; however, there are two significant debris piles that should be removed. It is uncertain if the residents are willing to provide the local match; however, he is willing to explore the availability of federal funds to assist in the clean-up. He is somewhat pessimistic about funding since the County was denied funding for the January 2013 landslides as well as a previous application for stream clean up in the Caney Fork community.

**(e) 911 Call Center and ECO:** The kick off meeting for this project was held on September 5<sup>th</sup>. He anticipates it will take 6 months to complete the plans and bid the project and a minimum of 12 months to complete construction.

**(f) Recreation Director:** The search committee will meet on September 17<sup>th</sup> to develop a schedule for completing the review of applications and interviews. The committee does not anticipate this process will be completed by October 1<sup>st</sup> when Jeff Carpenter retires so the Board will need to establish a method for managing the recreation programs until a new director is on board.

**(g) Welcome Signs:** New "welcome" signs have been erected on all highways that enter Jackson County welcoming people to the county and providing a website address.

**(h) Open House:** An open house is scheduled in Cashiers for the Senior Center, Sheriff's Dept., and Health Dept. on October 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm.

**(i) Transit Audit:** The Dept. of Transportation will be in the County on October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16th to perform an audit of the County Transit System.

**(j) OPTIN:** OPTIN is an organization gathering data across western North Carolina which will allow better marketing of the area. OPTIN is hosting a community meeting at WCU on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm at the University Center.

**(4) CONSENT AGENDA:** Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented Finance, Tax Collector and Refund Reports for August 2013 and 3 budget amendments.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Elders moved to approve the consent agenda.*

*Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(5) **TRANSIT – R.O.A.P. APPLICATION:** A public hearing was held on September 16, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. and no public comments or objections were made. The Board was requested to approve a Certified Statement for the FY2013-14 Rural Operation & Assistance Program (ROAP) grant application.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Certified Statement. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(6) **RECREATION MASTER PLAN:** The Recreation and Parks Advisory Board requested approval of the updated 2013 Recreation Master Plan as presented at the August 19, 2013 Work Session.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Cody moved to approve the updated Recreation Master Plan. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(7) **CULLOWHEE FIRE DEPT. PROPERTY TRANSFER:** Mr. Wooten stated there have been discussions concerning transferring County property (where the fire station is currently located) to the Cullowhee Fire Dept. He presented a plat prepared by Davenport & Associates dated January 1, 2009, proposing that the County transfer Lot B and Lot A2, a total of 4.12 acres, to the Cullowhee Fire Dept. The transfer would include a condition that the property is to be used for fire activities or a fire station located thereon and in the event that it ceases to be used for such, then the property would revert back to the County.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Greene moved to approve the transfer of the property to the Cullowhee Fire Department with the condition that if it ever ceases to be used for fire activities or a fire station, then the property would revert back to the county. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(8) **CASHIERS COMMERCIAL AREA DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT:** Gerald Green, Planning Director, stated the Cashiers Community Planning Council unanimously recommends an amendment to Section 3-2 of the Cashiers Commercial Area Development Ordinance. The amendment would reduce the number of members of the Community Planning Council from 10 regular members and 2 alternates to 7 regular members. After discussing the proposed amendment and inviting comments from the public, the Planning Council and Planning Board unanimously recommend amending the ordinance.

A public hearing was scheduled on October 21, 2013 at 5:50 p.m.

(9) **SURPLUS EQUIPMENT RESOLUTION (R13-23):** Darlene Fox, Finance Director, submitted a Resolution stated that some county equipment has been removed from service and is not needed or desired by other departments. She requested that the equipment be declared surplus and authorized for sale. NCGS 160A-266-270 authorizes the County to dispose of personal property by private negotiation, public auction either live or electronic, sealed bid or upset bid process. Swain County Government has offered to purchase the equipment for a fair and reasonable price.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Cody moved to adopt the Resolution. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(10) BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT:** Gerald Green, Planning Director, stated other counties in the region take different approaches to providing a board to hear administrative appeals and requests for variances. Haywood and Transylvania Counties' Board of Commissioners serve as the Board of Adjustment. Macon and Henderson Counties have a separate Board of Adjustment. He recommended appointment of an independent Board of Adjustment. He also recommended reappointment of current members who are willing to continue to serve and appointment of new members to fill vacancies.

*Carry over.*

**Informal Comments by Public:**

- (a) Jim Mueller of Glenville stated a recent article in a local paper referenced that one part of the county is being benefitted at the expense of other parts of the county. He stated there is a good group of Commissioners who are trying to improve the county for all citizens. In the north section of the county there is a new dental school being built, a 9-bay fire station, courthouse renovations with the new library, \$1 million roof for one of the schools, \$11million Performance Art Center and a new Gymnasium at SMHS, all of which are needed. In addition, the county was able to allocate money to the school board to keep 10-12 teacher assistants on the payroll. In the south section of the county, a new recreation center was built at a cost of \$3.5 million and a new ABC Store, not being built by the county, but will supply more sales tax money to the county.
- (b) Ralph Slaughter of Cashiers thanked the Board for moving the meetings to different locations throughout the county to show they are an open administration and are concerned not just about one part but the entire county.
- (c) Marie Leatherwood of Sylva continued her disapproval of the actions of the Board and disapproval of a fire tax.

**Press Conference**

There being no further business, Commissioner Elders moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

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W. J. Debnam, Chairman