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Posted By: Pat Parris
Witnessed By: _____

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
OCTOBER 21, 2013**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on October 21, 2013, 2:00 p.m., Justice & Administration Building, Room A227, 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
Pat Parris, Clerk to Board
J. K. Coward, Jr., County Attorney

Chairman Debnam called the work session to order.

(1) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TDA): Clifford Meads, Chairman, stated the Authority has made sufficient progress and he is very pleased with the attraction the County is receiving. It is important to stress that although the information put out by the TDA mentions festivals and events, those are things the visitor centers and chambers should be promoting, not the TDA. During the past year TDA publicity included: nineteen press releases, generation of more than 400 articles in newspapers, magazines and website based publications, television exposure, hosted seven travel writers groups, Governor's conference and NC Division of Tourism events, NC beer month, visitnc.com, and other group tours.

The tax report, after ten months, reflects a 7.6% increase in room tax collection. His personal business is up 7.6 %, which is good news.

The TDA has spent a lot of time this year promoting "Play On" which started in January and finished in September. It has a very solid foundation to send out to the region and world that Jackson County is the place to "Play On" and is a message for any age or any activity. A logo has been developed to go with the ads and will be used for different market applications, such as bumper stickers, medallions, etc. A branding agency from Wilmington, NC is in the process of writing a marketing plan based on "Play On". By the end of this year the County will have its first county-wide marketing plan as mandated in the resolution.

The terms of five TDA members will expire by January 1. The Authority will make some recommendations and, hopefully, the Commissioners will take those into consideration when making the final decisions. The appointment of the Chairperson will also need to be made.

Consensus: *Plan to have appointments made by the first meeting in December.*

(2) VIDEO TAPING COMMISSIONER MEETINGS: Ryan Hipps and Bob Garland of Stress Free Productions, Inc. (SFP), presented an overview for broadcasting Commissioner meetings via a “PEG” Channel. A PEG Channel is a Public, Education and Government access cable channel and the use thereof is statutorily mandated. There are currently 130 PEG Channels in the state. The NC Secretary of State was designated the exclusive franchising authority for cable service provided over a cable system (G.S. 66-351(a)).

(a) What could the county achieve by applying for a government channel?

- A designated fulltime channel on Morris Broadband to keep residents and visitors informed about county government;
- A medium that provides viewers with insight into county services;
- The ability to quickly disperse crucial information to citizens.

(b) Without a PEG Channel the county is not receiving quarterly distribution of its proportionate share of three taxes, minus \$1 million per quarter for supplemental PEG Channel support and to replace local cable TV franchises repealed as of 1/7/02:

- 7.70% of the net proceeds of the state sales tax on telecommunication services;
- 23.60% of the net proceeds of the state sales tax on video programming services, other than on direct-to-home satellite service;
- 37.10% of the net proceeds of the state sales tax on direct-to-home satellite service.

(c) The County must use the supplemental PEG channel support funds distributed to it for the operation and support of each of the qualifying channels it certifies by allocating the amount it receives equally among each of the qualifying PEG channels.

(d) Qualifying for a PEG Channel includes operating for at least 90 days during a fiscal year that meets all of the following programming requirements:

- It delivers at least 8 hrs. of scheduled programming a day;
- It delivers at least 6 hrs. and 45 mins. Of scheduled , non character-generated programming a day;
- Its programming content does not repeat more than 15% of the programming content on another PEG Channel provided to the same county.

(e) SFP would serve as the PEG Channel Operator and has provided service for Haywood County Government television for 11 years.

(f) SFP would operate and maintain County Government Television as follows:

- Digital signage with ability to update information as needed. Approved county employees would have 24/7 access to update information on JCTV.
- SFP Content Creation (features, interviews, informative programming).
- Recording & Cablecast of Jackson County Board of Commissioners’ meetings.
- Build On-demand video library.
- Live on-line streaming.

(g) Advantages of recording meetings are:

- An official record of each Board of Commissioners’ meeting (could serve as the official minutes).
- Archived meetings serve as an invaluable reference.
- Open and transparent government.
- Access for citizens to keep up with their local government.
- Meetings can be placed on-line and in public libraries.

(h) Summary:

- The County must submit a written request for a government channel to Morris Broadband.
- Once Morris Broadband has approved the request, the County would enter into an agreement with Stress Free Productions to be the channel operator and content provider.
- The agreement with SFP would include funding for start-up costs and maintenance.
- No later than July 15, 2014, the County must submit an application for video programming distribution to the NC Dept. of Revenue.

The only access would be through the local cable TV or the county website – thus those without internet service or local cable would not have access. The broadcast would not be live, but recorded and played on a later date. Residents with satellite service would have no access.

Haywood County pays Stress Free \$620 per month plus an hourly rate for filming meetings. Stress Free is responsible for scheduling daily programming to meet statutory requirements.

Consensus: *Mr. Wooten work with Stress Free Productions to draft a proposal; however, the County is under no obligation to consider or accept it.*

(3) **“OPT IN”**: Ben Brown, PlaceMakers, LLC, stated this project was created as the result of an impasse concerning issues involving Corridor K which is a proposed route by federal agencies through the mountains of western North Carolina. A federal mediation group met and made recommendations of a wider visioning process that might better inform the public of the overall transportation plan for the region as a whole. As a result, some funds were made available by the Federal Highway Administration, NCDOT, Southwestern Commission and the Appalachian Regional Commission to undertake a regional vision exercise to fully gather priorities from all seven counties and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians into a regional vision and also create a comprehensive plan for Cherokee and Graham counties who are most directly affected by the Corridor K proposal and also do a comprehensive transportation plan for Graham County.

Opt-In is a year-long effort to fill in research gaps, identify opportunities, and test alternative strategies to inform decision-making about economic development, transportation planning, and the environment. A Regional Vision Plan will reflect a collaboration of citizens and leaders to clarify goals and identify successful strategies for the future. Opt-In is managed by the Southwestern Commission on behalf of the region’s seven counties and the 16 municipalities within the counties. A Leadership Council of elected officials, business professionals and non-profit leaders from the region will act as a steering committee.

The purpose of a draft Regional Vision Plan is to organize ideas, themes, and recommendations suggested by regional leaders and stakeholders into a coherent document. The ideas were collected from over 100 one-on-one and small group interviews conducted in each of the seven counties and the Qualla Boundary. Individuals and organizations interviewed include, among others, elected and appointed officials, business leaders, downtown businesses, economic development directors, developers, health practitioners and officials, community organizations, not for profit organizations, and advocacy groups. The information was organized into five pillars that represent the basic focus areas of the seven-county regional vision and are:

- *The Place We’re Given...* About the region’s exceptional natural resources;
- *The Economy We Need...* About economic development and job creation;
- *The Places We Make...* About the man-made environment and the development patterns found throughout the region;
- *The Ways We Get Around...* About issues of regional mobility;
- *The Quality of Life We Expect...* About access to education, health care, and the advantages of small town life.

The process concludes with a Regional Summit in the summer of 2014.

(4) JUSTICE CENTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROPOSAL: (via conference call) Doug Kepplin of Heery Design submitted a Justice Center needs assessment. The Justice Center is at capacity and in many departments, stressed beyond capacity. There are a number of planning issues that contribute to the efficiency and capacity including: multiple public entries, lack of building security screening, non-secure circulation for judiciary and in-custody movement, blended court functions with county government and limited courtroom size options. There are moisture intrusion issues that should be addressed. The existing Sheriff and Jail addition adds a third public entrance and isolates the Magistrate function from the balance of court operations. The circulation path for detainees to the second floor courtrooms is inefficient and bisects the building. The current surface parking supply is limited and in the near future may not be able to meet demand due to the high concentration of county government, courthouse operations and booking/visitation. The primary objective of the needs assessment and facility plan is to develop a reasonable vision and strategy to plan for and manage growth. The approach for the court facility space offers an objective, technically sound model to manage the allocation of the County's annual capital projects budget for both immediate needs and major projects to be programmed over several years.

Heery Design would request that a permanent Court Working Group be established to both initiate the study process and to participate periodically throughout the charrette phase in guiding the Heery Design team in its efforts. It is suggested that an appointed group of five to seven participants serve as a project working group to facilitate the planning work and serve as liaisons to the other user groups. A preliminary schedule will be developed, refined and submitted within 15 days after the contract is completed. Time required to complete the Scope of Work tasks is estimated to be 3 weeks. The preliminary schedule will define critical submissions, scheduled meetings, submittals, and review activities. The assumed start period is Fall of 2013.

Heery Design will provide the services described in the Scope of Services for \$ 30,985. The design fees reflect labor and direct expenses associated with the anticipated Scope of Services. Travel related costs (airfare, auto, hotel, and per diem) are considered reimbursable costs and are not included in the professional service fees. An allowance of \$3,370 should be allocated for those reimbursements. The total cost for services is \$ 34,355.

Consensus: *Heery Design to submit a contract for consideration. Mr. Wooten to identify the funding source at the November 4th meeting.*

(5) VOLUNTEER POLICY: Mr. Wooten stated that Katy Elders, WCU Graduate Research Asst., was requested to draft a Volunteer Policy for discussion.

The proposed policy establishes recruitment and selection procedures, eligibility requirements, and standards of service. In an effort to minimize volunteer risk, the policy outlines the rights and responsibilities of the county and the volunteer. General administration of the volunteer policy is the responsibility of the department for which the volunteer works. Any change or amendment to the volunteer policy is the exclusive right of the Board of Commissioners. All volunteers will be held to the same behavior standards as county employees. Applicable county and departmental policies will be reviewed with each volunteer during the department's orientation. A proposed Volunteer Application Form was also presented.

Consensus: *Request feedback, make updates and present a revised policy for consideration.*

(6) **PROPERTY TAX BILLS:** Katy Elders, WCU Graduate Research Asst., was requested to prepare a Property Tax Distribution Profile. The profile included the following:

Total Real Property Value	\$ 11,602,364,908
Total Net Value	\$ 10,994,841,161
Total Tax Bills	\$ 30,835,850
Tax Bills Issued:	
In-County	18,285 (46.35%)
In-State, Out-of-County	4,000 (10.14%)
Out-of-State	17,167 (43.51%)
Total Tax Bills	39,452

	Real Property Value	Net Value	Tax	Bills Issued
In County	\$4,144,256,023	\$3,799,679,809	\$10,680,630.21	18,285
Out of County	\$7,458,108,885	\$7,195,161,352	\$20,155,220.12	21,167

Township	Real Property Value	Net Value	Tax Bill	Bills Issued
Cashiers	\$3,549,061,920	\$3,538,909,156	\$9,915,145.44	6,780
Hamburg	\$2,873,540,210	\$2,677,278,625	\$7,497,789.00	5,787
Scott Creek	\$ 689,306,543	\$ 601,139,676	\$1,683,786.78	2,970
Cullohee	\$ 535,192,480	\$ 487,496,053	\$1,368,679.68	2,566
Qualla	\$ 509,843,420	\$ 484,250,275	\$1,359,057.87	3,172
Sylva-Rural	\$ 478,177,910	\$ 459,239,103	\$1,291,432.61	2,968
Sylva-City	\$ 376,704,700	\$ 404,443,851	\$1,137,877.36	1,765
River	\$ 427,004,380	\$ 358,834,181	\$1,026,283.90	1,483
Mountain	\$ 387,418,470	\$ 354,258,650	\$ 991,924.09	1,453
Webster	\$ 323,770,750	\$ 303,937,418	\$ 851,024.85	1,787
Barkers Creek	\$ 326,147,050	\$ 302,274,927	\$ 846,393.76	2,147
Canada	\$ 336,241,290	\$ 284,218,955	\$ 795,813.07	1,239
Savannah	\$ 241,999,415	\$ 228,354,465	\$ 639,474.83	1,818
Dillsboro-Rural	\$ 173,151,520	\$ 170,446,040	\$ 479,473.01	1,163
Greens Creek	\$ 176,290,340	\$ 167,414,782	\$ 468,761.34	1,280
Caney Fork	\$ 155,981,360	\$ 127,948,216	\$ 358,255.09	825
Dillsboro City	\$ 42,533,150	\$ 43,766,985	\$ 122,914.19	205

The report also included a breakdown of out-of-county cities, out-of-state and zip code distributions. Tax bills are sent to property owners located in 49 states and Washington, D.C. Property taxes for the top three are: FL \$6.5 million, GA \$4.5 million and SC \$1.6 million. Out of country owners' tax bills total \$30,129.

She suggested that the Board review and consider, for future research, the following:

- (a) How can the county measure the impact of an increased percentage of out of state property owners?
- (b) With the majority of property owners being out-of-state, how does this affect sales and use taxes in the county?
- (c) What are the sizes of these properties? How much actual land is owned by those living outside the county?
- (d) What is the percentage of property owned by out-of-county residents is being developed? How much is vacant land? How much is subdivisions?
- (e) Does the county have or has it ever considered having homestead exemptions? Conversely, has it ever taxed absentee landlords or property owners as some other counties do?

(7) POPULATION ESTIMATES: Gerald Green, Planning Director, presented a preliminary 2012 County Unincorporated Area Population Estimates from the Office of State Budget and Management. The information was provided so the County can preview the Certified Estimate of the July 1, 2012 permanent resident population of the unincorporated portion of the County (the county balance). The estimate is used for the purpose of distributing state-shared revenues to municipal and county governments.

	April 2010	July 2012 Certified Estimate	% Increase
Total Population	40,271	40,788	1.29
Unincorporated Area	36,719	37,274	1.52
Incorporated Area			
Dillsboro	232	367	-0.43
Forest Hills	365	367	0.55
Sylva	2,588	2,702	4.40
Webster	363	365	0.55
Total Incorporated	3,548	3,665	3.30

Jackson County Balance:

April 1, 2010 County Balance Population: 36,719

July 1, 2012 Certified Population Estimate: 37,274

- Estimates are certified by the NC Office of State Budget and Management
- 2012 Municipal estimates not available at this time
- Total of 2012 certified unincorporated area population and 2011 certified incorporated area population exceeds 2012 certified total county population

(8) PERMITTING & CODE ENFORCEMENT: Tony Elders, Director, presented the following:

	Salaries	Staff Positions	Revenues	Justification
2011-12	\$ 840,355	6 clerical, 15 field	\$ 278,421	
2012-13	\$ 728,527	5 clerical, 13 field	\$ 397,903	
2013-14	\$ 689,733	4 clerical, 12 field	\$ 367,050 (budgeted)	(\$367,050)
			\$ 400,000 (projected)	\$400,000
				\$ 32,950

He stated that while reducing staff over the last three years, his department has taken on additional duties including plat review for all plats to be recorded in the Register of Deeds, fire inspections of all structures as required by the fire code, administration of the abandoned mobile home grant, and an increasing number of requests from the municipalities. Currently there are plans and applications in the office that will total over \$150,000 in permit fees for new apartments in Cullowhee. He is awaiting final septic system approval to move forward with permitting 28 duplex condominiums in the Trillium development which will generate over \$50,000 in permit fees. The Cullowhee River Club has been issued an initial Land Development Permit. This development will generate significant additional revenue going forward.

At this time, he must keep some field staff in the office to assist with the volume of calls and lobby traffic. The work volume has increased to the point that it will be difficult to provide the level of service citizens have become accustomed to in the permit office. Additional clerical staff is needed to handle the volume of office work and allow the field staff to remain in the field.

Based on budget projections, both for the remainder of this fiscal year and a full budget year going forward, the additional revenue generated will more than make up for the added expense. The cost, including benefits, for a new position from November 2013 - June 2014 is \$26,254. He requested authorization to add a clerical position as soon as possible.

Consensus: *Move forward with the new position.*

(9) **VEHICLE REPLACEMENTS:** Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the following:

Description	Price Per Unit	Total Price
Sheriff: 2 Dodge Chargers - Patrol	\$ 24,369.00	\$ 48,736.00
1 Dodge Charger - Sheriff	\$ 23,863.00	\$ 23,863.00
1 Ford F150 Pickup - Detective	\$ 28,220./00	\$ 28,220.00
1 Ford Expedition - Detective	\$ 28,569.00	\$ 28,569.00
1 Ford Expedition - Patrol	\$ 29,469.00	\$ 29,469.00
Grounds: 2 F350 Crew Cabs	\$ 27,633.90	\$ 55,267.80
Total for Replacements		\$ 214,124.90

Consensus: *Ms. Fox to prepare a budget amendment for Board approval. Funding would be from the Capital Reserve Fund.*

There being no further comments, Commissioner Elders moved to adjourn the Work Session. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the Work Session adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

W. J. Debnam, Chairman