

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
MAY 19, 2014**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on May 19, 2014, 6:00 pm, Justice & Administration Bldg., Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Rd., Sylva, 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 deleting Historic Preservation Commission appointment. Commissioner Elders moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**MINUTES:** Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Minutes of the Work Session, Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of May 5, 2014. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

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

**(a) Tourism Information:** On April 11<sup>th</sup> the Hospitality and Tourism Program at WCU hosted a regional meeting on the economic impact of tourism to Western North Carolina. As part of the conference each county was provided a profile of various data attributes related to tourism spending. The information demonstrates the financial impact on Jackson County from travel and tourism. Utilizing this information from 2012, they calculated that residents paid \$321 less in local and state taxes because of tourism spending. Since 2010, tourism spending has continued to increase with a 4.1% over 2011.

**(b) Alec Stillwell Lease:** Mr. Stillwell had given notice that he will vacate the building on Grindstaff Cove Road that the County acquired from the Town of Sylva; however, he has now changed his mind and wants to continue leasing the building.

**(c) East Carolina Dental Clinic:** The clinic is up and running and the first class of students will begin their residency this summer. They have asked permission to erect a sign on Hwy. 116 and Chad Parker is working with them on this request.

**(d) Community Services Building:** He met with Odell Thompson, Chad Parker and Paula Carden on May 13<sup>th</sup> to begin the project of identifying space improvements and other renovation needs for that building. The County has set aside \$403k to begin this process and Ms. Carden has indicated that the Health Board has asked that future Medicaid hold harmless funds be earmarked for this purpose. As those funds are received, the County will determine how much is required to support other capital needs of the Health Department and any residual funds will be reported to the Commissioners for consideration.

(e) **Smoky Mountain High School**: The punch list items are continuing to be resolved. There are a couple of issues that will require intervention on behalf of the designer and they are working through those issues. The school will have its annual awards ceremony in the Fine Arts building later this month as well as the season ending musical presentation. One of the punch list items is balancing the sound system.

(f) **July 15th Primary**: Lisa Lovedahl, Election Director, has indicated that a second primary will be required on July 15<sup>th</sup> for a congressional run-off in the eastern part of the state; therefore, the run-off for republican candidates for sheriff in Jackson County will take place at the same time.

(g) **Upcoming Events**: The Region A quarterly meeting is May 20<sup>th</sup> beginning with dinner at 6:30 pm at the Boiler Room Steakhouse in Franklin. The County Assembly Day is scheduled on May 28<sup>th</sup> in Raleigh and he plans to attend that meeting.

(2) **CONSENT AGENDA**: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented Finance, Tax Collector and Refund Reports for April 2014 and one budget amendments.

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

(3) **PROPOSED BUDGET - FY2014-15**: Mr. Wooten presented the proposed FY2014-15 Budget and stated it is balanced without any modification to the current ad valorem tax rate of \$0.28. The budget is \$59,693,203. He gave a brief overview as follows:

(a) **Salary Increase**: 1.5% across the board increase for all employees as of July 1, 2014. In addition, each employee will receive 2.5 days of bonus leave which equates to approximately 1.0% of an employee's salary thus an overall salary/benefit increase of 2.5% is recommended.

(b) **Fulltime Employees (FTE)**: A net increase of 7.93 FTE.

- The largest increase is within the Dept. of Social Services (5.60 FTE) and those positions are being established to support the increased workload from mandated system modifications
- Two new support positions in the IT Dept. which will show up in FY14-15 as increases in FTE only as funds were provided in the FY 13-14 budget.
- One fire inspector position in the Permitting & Code Enforcement Dept. to allow compliance with the statutory requirements for fire inspections.
- One half time clerical position in the Planning Dept. with the responsibility for official minutes of the boards and commissions that are supported by the Planning Dept.

(c) **Public Schools**: Funding for Public School is consistent with their budget requests. A School Resource Officer position was not funded, but school safety will be revisited after a new Sheriff is in place.

(d) **Southwestern Community College**: The proposed funding for SCC current operations represents an increase of \$170,000 over the FY 13-14 appropriation to help offset the gap of request in previous budgets. There is a possibility that Macon County may choose to discontinue their support for current operations in the amount of \$200,000 at the Sylva Campus and this would cause SCC to incur a substantial deficit in their current operations budget.

(e) **Fontana Regional Library**: An increase of \$39,000 (4.24%) is recommended for the Fontana Regional Library. This will provide sufficient funds to cover their proposed salary increase and the projected increase in health insurance costs for employees.

(f) **Non-Profits**: Most non-profit agency allocations have remained the same with a few exceptions. One time allocations of \$5,000 each are proposed for ARF and Appalachian Women's Center to be used as matching funds for grants they will receive. Funding for REACH of Macon's operating budget remains at \$50,000 and a one-time, non-recurring allocation of \$25,000 is proposed to support their new shelter capital project.

(g) **Fire Depts., Rescue Squads, Ambulance Services**: Budgets for fire departments, rescue squads and EMS providers are proposed to increase by 2%. A one-time allocation of \$17,275 is recommended for engineering and architectural services for the Cullowhee Fire Department in planning for a new fire station.

(k) **Capital Projects**: Propose a transfer into the capital reserve fund of \$500,000 for future capital projects and includes a \$100,000 transfer into the Conservation, Preservation and Recreation capital reserve fund to continue supporting recreation and greenway projects.

The FY 14-15 proposed general fund budget is 1% higher than the original approved budget for FY 13-14. Traditionally, revenues have been conservatively estimated and expenditures have been managed within the available resources.

(4) **PROPOSED BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING**: A public hearing was scheduled on June 2, 2014 at 1:30 p.m.

(5) **SOLID WASTE - PROPOSALS TO PURCHASE RECYCLING**: Chad Parker, Public Works Director, stated that two proposals were received for the purchase of the County's recyclables. He recommended that the highest proposal from American Recycling be accepted.

**Motion**: *Commissioner Elders moved to accept the proposal from American Recycling. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(6) SHERIFF'S OFFICE - 2014 JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT:** Major Shannon Queen stated he has filed an application for a 2014 Justice Assistance Grant. The funds will be used to improve the internal safety and security of the Sheriff's Office by increasing the use of electronic locks, lock monitoring and card swipe systems. This is a \$10,219 grant (\$9,197.10 for equipment, \$1,021.90 administration fees). Although no local funds or Board approval is needed, the grant requires that the public be informed about the application and intended use of the funds. He requested that a public hearing be scheduled.

Chairman Debnam scheduled a public hearing on June 16.

**(7) TUCKASEIGEE MILLS BLDG - ASBESTOS ABATEMENT CONTRACT:** Mr. Wooten presented a proposal from NEO Corporation to abate 36,120 sf of flooring material in the Tuckasegee Mills Bldg. that contains asbestos at a cost of \$69,400. Funding would be from the Economic Development Fund.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Jones moved to accept the proposal. Commissioner Elders seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(8) TUCKASEIGEE MILLS BLDG. - ConMet LEASE:** Mr. Wooten reported that ConMet, a manufacturing company headquartered in Bryson City, submitted a proposal to lease 60,000 sf for warehouse/storage purposes in the Tuckasegee Mills Bldg. The proposed rent is \$48,000 (\$0.80/sf) for a term of 3 years with an 18 month early termination option. The company will invest approximately \$350,000 to upgrade lighting, bathroom upgrade, docks and interior paint. The company will be responsible for all interior maintenance during the term of the lease and wants to begin renovations immediately and plans to create 25 new jobs within the next 12 months.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Cody moved to approve the proposal contingent upon Mr. Coward drafting a lease. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(9) PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE EQUIPMENT BIDS:** Mr. Wooten reported 4 bids were received for pedestrian bridge equipment for a "Tied Arch Bridge". The bids were only for the prefabricated steel bridge equipment delivered to the job site, but did not include any costs for installation, site work or other amenities. He recommended that the bid be awarded to Excel Bridge Mfg. Co. for Alternates 2A, 2B and 6 in the total amount of \$304,000.00 for the "Tied Arch Bridge" provided the following pre-requisites are satisfied:

(a) That a written determination be received from Duke Energy, Frontier Communications and Morris Broadband confirming that the existing overhead utilities along the Old Cullowhee Road (SR 1002) can be raised and/or relocated to avoid clearance issues with the pedestrian bridge landing on the east side of the river. The bridge must be elevated significantly in this area to provide protection from the 100 year flood. The written determination from these utilities should provide details of the proposed modifications along with the associated costs to the County.

- (b) That the Memorandum of Understanding be finalized with TWSA to confirm that the pedestrian bridge landing on the west side of the river is acceptable to TWSA.
- (c) That he and the structural sub-consultant be given the opportunity to review the geotechnical report currently being prepared for soil conditions in the vicinity of the bridge foundations.
- (d) He recommended that the County Attorney review the Bid (Contract) documents prior to awarding the contract.

Mr. Wooten stated that funding will be from the Greenway Fund.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Cody moved to award the bid to Excel Bridge Mfg. Co. in the amount of \$304,000 contingent upon satisfaction of the pre-requisites. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(10) SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Greene moved to reappoint Vance Davidson to a 4-year term on the SCC Board of Trustees. Commissioner Elders seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(11) CASHIERS PLANNING COUNCIL:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Greene moved to appoint Rick Robson to fill the unexpired term of Pat Nardy, Sally Peterkin to fill the unexpired term of Jeff Zahner, and reappoint Will McKee to a 3-year term expiring on December 31, 2016 on the Cashiers Planning Council. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**Informal Comments by Public:**

- (a) Marie Leatherwood of Sylva stated her disapproval of any public monies being used in any deal with GSMR.
- (b) Carl Iobst of Cullowhee stated that he will, in the near future, present an opinion of the expansion of the Justice Center as it was proposed and why it is not in the best interest of everyone.

**Press Conference**

There being no further business, Commissioner Jones 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

