

**MINUTES OF A  
WORK SESSION  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2014**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on September 15, 2014, 1:00 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  
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board  
J. K. Coward, Jr., County Attorney

Chairman Debnam called the work session to order.

**AGENDA:** Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Commissioner Greene stated that she was under the impression at the last work session that the Commissioners would be discussing fracking at this work session and would consider a resolution in opposition to it. Further, she did not realize until she saw the agenda online that fracking was not scheduled to be discussed. Mr. Wooten stated that his understanding was that since DENR's decision not to collect rocks and test here for potential gas deposits this year made the issue moot and relieved the concern of putting the issue on the agenda. Chairman Debnam stated Mr. Wooten called and informed him of DENR's actions and Chairman Debnam told him to remove the issue from the agenda because of DENR's decision. Motion carried

**(2) CULLOWHEE RIVER CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT (CuRvE):** Rick Bennett, Maurice Phipps, Anna Fariello, and Tom Tveidt presented:

**(a) History:**

- Cullowhee Revitalization Endeavor "CuRvE" formed in 2007.
- Projects: Trash pick-up, flower boxes, river cleanup.
- CuRvE facilitated a number of community meetings to discuss the future of Cullowhee.
- CuRvE learned that the DOT was replacing the 1940's era bridge over the Tuckasegee River beginning in 2014.
- CuRvE negotiated with DOT for sidewalk, bike path, river access, and rock facing on the new bridge.
- CuRvE promotes sustainable uses of the river, a key asset of the community for both recreation and economic development.

**(b) Cullowhee River Park:**

- CuRvE looked at river parks in other states. In Colorado, 25 towns developed river parks.
- CuRvE is planning and proposing a family river park along the Tuckasegee.
- CuRvE envisions the river park as a catalyst for economic development.
- The river park would be sited between the Cullowhee dam and the new bridge.
- The river park is proposed to eventually connect to the County Greenway.

**(c) Current Projects:**

- Cullowhee River Corridor: CuRvE has targeted a 3.5 mile stretch of the Tuckasegee River, where it runs through the heart of historic Cullowhee:
  - Locust Creek river access
  - Greenway foot bridge

- Jackson County Greenway
- Greenway trailhead
- Painter Park and garden
- Cullowhee historic center
- Cullowhee River bridge
- Tuckasegee River bridge
- Lena Davis Landing
- Western Carolina campus
- CuRvE has worked closely with the County.
- Seeking the advice and meeting facilitation of County Planner, Gerald Green.
- Seeking and receiving the endorsement of Economic Development Director, Rich Price.
- Working with Rusty Ellis and Jennifer Bennett to gain the endorsement of the Recreation Advisory Board.
- Partnering with Land Trust of the Little Tennessee.
- Negotiating with NCDOT on bridge improvements.

**(d) Toolbox Grant:** CuRvE received an Appalachian Regional Commission “Toolbox” grant from the Southwestern Commission to:

- Develop a conceptual design and engineering plan for a river park.
- Develop a series of drawings to help promote a vision for the Cullowhee River Corridor.
- An additional \$10,000 brought into the County.

**(e) Blue Ridge National Heritage Partners Grant:** CuRvE applied for this grant for:

- A total of \$17,500 in federal dollars brought into the County.
- Interpretive signage.
- Funding for an intern.
- Economic impact study.

**(f) Economic Impact Study:**

- Economic Impacts of the Cullowhee River Corridor Development – Near Term Benefits to the County with additional local spending will come from three major activities:
  - Capturing spending that is currently flowing out of the county. Local spending will increase by \$800,000 simply by capturing about 2 recreational trips for each participant that currently is traveling outside the county for similar activities.
  - Attracting nonresident visitors to events in the county. Annual spending by nonresident even attendees should total \$339,516.
  - Attracting nonresidents to participate in nonevent river recreation activities in the county. The county should expect to receive \$82,046 in annual spending from the additional nonresident river recreation participants.
- The total annual economic impacts in the county from the additional spending:

	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Value Added</b>	<b>Output</b>
<b>Direct</b>	13.3	\$295,664	\$436,379	\$ 757,674
<b>Indirect</b>	1.3	\$ 36,382	\$ 87,467	\$ 136,741
<b>Induced</b>	1.4	\$ 43,169	\$102,471	\$ 154,926
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>\$375,216</b>	<b>\$626,316</b>	<b>\$1,049,341</b>

	<b>Tax Revenue</b>
<b>State/Local</b>	<b>\$ 71,178</b>
<b>Federal</b>	<b>\$ 74,070</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$145,248</b>

- The one-time economic impacts in the county from the proposed in-stream construction:

	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Value Added</b>	<b>Output</b>
<b>Direct</b>	10.8	\$ 364,339	\$ 441,418	\$1,478,385
<b>Indirect</b>	2.5	\$ 83,397	\$ 160,159	\$ 263,550
<b>Induced</b>	2.0	\$ 58,939	\$ 139,634	\$ 211,112
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>\$ 506,676</b>	<b>\$ 741,211</b>	<b>\$1,953,047</b>

	<b>Tax Revenue</b>
<b>State/Local</b>	<b>\$ 42,690</b>
<b>Federal</b>	<b>\$ 80,273</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 122,963</b>

**(g) Impact of Development of River Corridor:**

- In the near term, the Cullowhee River Corridor Development will annually add \$1.2 million of new spending in Jackson County.
- Support 16 new local jobs each year.
- Generate \$145 thousand in annual tax revenues.
- In the long-term, estimates have the potential to be much greater.

**(3) CIRCLES OF HOPE:** Millie Hershenon, Coordinator Circles of Hope Haywood/Jackson County and Ann Melton presented Circles® Mission which is a program to inspire and equip individuals, families and communities to thrive and end poverty. Circles® is a community-driven solution addressing the underlying causes of poverty and supporting families and individuals in a holistic, long-term pathway to economic stability. Circles is a high impact strategy that will:

- (a) Change the mindset of the community so that it wants to end poverty.
- (b) Change goals, policies and approaches to end poverty.
- (c) Empower people in poverty to help solve community problems while transitioning out of poverty themselves.

As of January, 2014, there are over 80 Circles® sites involved in implementing Circles. The core of Circles® consists of two or more middle and upper income volunteers, “Allies”, who are matched with a family or individuals who are ready to move out of poverty. The Allies provide friendships, coaching, networking and anything else necessary to help families achieve their self-sufficiency goals. The participants are known as Circle Leaders and are expected to take the action steps needed for them to become economically stable while helping community leaders learn how to help others out of poverty.

**(4) WEBSTER ENTERPRISES:** Gene Robinson, Executive Director Webster Enterprises and Noel Watts, CEO and President of MARC, Inc. stated Webster Enterprises (Webster) has several opportunities to greatly expand and diversify its product line outside of medical devices. In order to capitalize on these opportunities in the near term, it is imperative that Webster has access to a facility that will enable it to establish much larger and more robust manufacturing operations. This growth will not only enable a much broader diversification of products but it will also result in the generation of much healthier revenue streams that will yield greater financial contributions to its operations and mission. Webster expects to create 25 new jobs and to retain 12 existing jobs in the next year through this expansion and will continue to add jobs in the coming years as operations grow.

To achieve this, Webster intends to move forward with the acquisition of the Ashley Building. Webster is requesting that the county continue its generous support of the growth and mission and make a financial contribution to this effort. Inasmuch as the county previously committed to helping Webster secure additional manufacturing space, Webster respectfully request a grant in the sum of \$165,000 to assist with transitioning into the manufacturing center that will be established at the Ashley Building. This funding will be used for moving manufacturing equipment, purchasing required furniture and fixtures, IT infrastructure, payment of rent, utilities and payroll expenses during start up.

Subject to a favorable decision by the Board of Commissioners on this request, Webster intends to enter into a one-year lease/purchase agreement for the Ashley Building for a price of \$650,000. The financing plan for acquisition of the building will be worked out over the next six months. Webster is exploring several financing options and will continue working with its board of directors to craft a sound, fiscally responsible plan. Webster is considering pursuing grants from the Golden Leaf Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Appalachian Regional Commission and are considering financing options and packages with USDA Rural Development, traditional bank financing in collaboration with county, town and Region A revolving loan funds. Webster wants to finalize the purchase of the building within this time frame.

In order to take advantage of new and expanding manufacturing opportunities, it is imperative that Webster move in and begin operations at the Ashley Building as soon as possible. Webster plans to do this within the next three months. Webster Enterprises is grateful for the county’s partnership in its mission to serve the needs of the county’s disabled citizens. The county’s continued financial support is critical to this project and the continued growth and success of Webster, its employees and most importantly, the clients it serves.

MARC serves as a catalyst for innovations that improve the economic and social quality of life for people with disabilities and disadvantages. MARC has 14 Locations in 21 NC counties and 1.6 million square feet. MARC is committed to organizational excellence to its members and stakeholders.

**(5) COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER RENOVATIONS:** Paula Carden, Health Department Director and Odell Thompson, Architect, presented an estimate of potential construction costs. The goal was to determine if the current building could be reconfigured to meet the needs of the Health Department over the next 10-15 years.

		QTY	UNITS	\$/UNIT	COST
<b>Main Floor</b>	Remodel existing office spaces into new office spaces	2680	SF	\$ 85	\$ 227,800
	Remodel existing into new clinic spaces w/some sinks	4452	SF	100	445,200
	Remodel existing into new lab with more sinks	1425	SF	125	178,125
	Remodel existing into new restrooms/shower/locker rooms	536	SF	175	93,800
	Up fit open space into new offices	3580	SF	85	304,300
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>12,673</b>			<b>\$1,249,225</b>
<b>Upper Floor</b>	Remodel existing office spaces into new office spaces	3580	SF	\$ 85	\$ 304,300
	Remodel existing into new clinic spaces with some sinks	-0-	SF	100	-0-
	Remodel existing into new lab with more sinks	-0-	SF	125	-0-
	Remodel existing into new restrooms/shower/locker rooms	-0-	SF	175	-0-
	Up fit open space into new offices	3580	SF	85	-0-
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7,160</b>			<b>\$ 608,600</b>
<b>Both Floors</b>	New floor structure in 2 story central room	3580	SF	\$ 50	\$ 179,000
	New ADA compliant elevator in reconfigured shaft	1	LS	75,000	75,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 254,000</b>
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$2,111,825</b>
	<b>CONTINGENCY</b>	<b>15%</b>			<b>316,773</b>
	<b>TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COSTS</b>				<b>\$2,428,599</b>
	Design fees A/E fees (A,M,E,P,S)	<b>7%</b>	<b>Of</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>\$ 170,002</b>
	Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment	<b>19833</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>\$ 25</b>	<b>\$ 495,825</b>
	<b>GRANT TOTAL</b>				<b>\$3,094,426</b>

**(6) JUSTICE CENTER SECURITY:** Mr. Wooten and Odell Thompson, Architect, stated that they were in a meeting involving the Sheriff's Department, Code Enforcement, IT and Public Works to assess the building for security measures. It was determined that the existing main entrance to the building could potentially be turned into a secure entrance with a storefront wall partition between the entrance and the steps leading to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. This would require the public to go through a metal detector and a bag detection system. A new door is proposed to be installed to provide an exit without going back through the metal detection area. It is believed that this could be accomplished with the space available with some modifications.

The doors at the back of building would have electronic access for staff along with another electronic access door from the foyer into the hall. The double doors in the Sheriff's Department would be closed and locked. The public could still have access to the lobby area of the Sheriff's Department, but could not go through the hallway to other portions of the building. The door at the top of the steps at the Planning Department will also have an electronic access. They are also considering putting electronic access on the second floor at the top of the stairs. This is all in an effort to force all public access through the front entrance of the building. Installing both interior and exterior cameras are being reviewed. Also, considering the idea of moving an existing door to provide a better secure area at the back of the courtrooms, would provide better security for the judges at their offices.

The NC Sheriff's Association is scheduled to be here on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, as Judge Letts has recommended. When the County obtains the assessment report from the Sheriff's Association, there will be a better understanding of what options are available. At that point, the County will move forward with gathering costs associated with the implementation of the renovations, equipment and staffing.

There being no further comments, Commissioner Greene moved to adjourn the Work Session. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the Work Session adjourned at 3:24 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

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W. J. Debnam, Chairman