

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MARCH 14, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on March 14, 2017, 1:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A227, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Charles Elders, Vice Chair
Boyce Deitz, Commissioner
Mickey Luker, Commissioner
Ron Mau, Commissioner

Don Adams, County Manager
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Chairman McMahan offer his condolences to the family of Swain County Commissioner David Monteith. He was a good friend and represented Swain County in an outstanding way.

Commissioner Elders stated it had been a privilege to work with David Monteith. He was very dedicated to being a Commissioner, to his church, to his family and to his community.

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) HARRIS REGIONAL HOSPITAL AND EMS UPDATE: Present for discussions: Steve Heatherly, President and CEO of Harris Regional Hospital; Matthew Burrell, EMS Operations Manager; Stephen Plemmons, Senior Director of Emergency Services; Kyle Dowling, EMS Service Supervisor; and Toby Moore, EMS Service Supervisor.

Mr. Heatherly provided an update on several ongoing hospital projects. The construction of the emergency department had begun in earnest and the community should start seeing that structure go up in the next few weeks. They anticipated that the project would be completed around September.

Another significant ongoing project was the Women and Children’s Center renovation. They were currently working with the state on the details, particularly with asbestos abatement, but they anticipated the renovation would be completed by the end of the year. Regarding physician recruitment, last month they added an orthopedic surgeon/sports medicine doctor. Also, they were restarting the cardiology program at the hospital by adding two cardiologists.

Mr. Burrell presented the Harris EMS quarterly update:

(a) Call volume by month for 2016:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Call Volume</u>
January	440
February	391
March	429
April	408
May	461
June	435
July	496
August	561
September	495
October	512
November	460
December	521

(b) Calls by unit number:

Unit	Unit Type	Count
MED1	Supervisor QRV staffed 0700-1900	130
MED12	Backup crew or extra crew	96
MED13	Extra crew for OOT transports	28
MED3	24 hour truck in Sylva	2066
MED4	24 hour truck in Cullowhee	1872
MED5	Prime time unit 0900-2100	1245
MED6	Prime time unit 1000-2200	173
Total		5610

(c) Call volume by fire district:

District	Count
Sylva	3,546
Cullowhee	868
Qualla	558
Savannah	282
Balsam	208
OOT (out of town pick up)	91
Canada	57

(d) Service provided: Standbys and special events Harris EMS participated in during 2016:

- Standby for fire support 43 calls.
- Standby for law enforcement 10 calls.
- Standby for eight WCU football games/scrimmages.
- Standby for six SMHS varsity football games.
- Standby for six SMHS JV football games.
- Standby for four middle school games.
- Standby for five youth football games.
- Coverage in downtown Sylva for Greening Up the Mountains event.
- Coverage at WCU during Mountain Heritage Day.
- Coverage of WCU band competition.
- Coverage for New Year's Day run.
- Coverage during July 4th downtown celebrations.
- Participated in fire prevention at all elementary schools in our service area in addition to tow private schools.
- Participated in countywide disaster drill.
- Their UTV was utilized during several wildfires as an asset donation in order to support fire suppression activities.

(e) New Units: Harris EMS took possession of five new ambulances. The units were 2017 Ford F-450 Type I ambulances manufactured by AEV. The units were four wheel drive and equipped with Stryker power stretchers. All units had been inspected by the NCOEMS and were currently in service.

(f) Quality Improvement Projects: Harris EMS updated their treatment protocols to stay in line with the NCOEMS' current standards. Within these protocols, they submitted for approval to add a new medication to their formulary called Tranexamic Acid (TXA). This medication was reserved for use for extremely critical trauma patients to help with shock. They worked closely with their Medical Director, Dr. Judson Garbarino, the NCOEMS and the Trauma Services Coordinator RN at Mission Hospital, in order to institute the medication. This medication, along with their updated protocols was currently in the hands of the State Medical Director, for final approval. Once approved by the NCOEMS, the use of these protocols and medications would be available for both services in the Jackson EMS system.

Harris EMS developed and submitted a sepsis protocol. Sepsis was responsible for about 260,000 deaths in the US each year. Sepsis had been identified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as a core measure. All hospitals across the county have to screen all patients for sepsis and treat sepsis patients early and aggressively as it was a time sensitive emergency. Harris EMS developed a protocol that gave the paramedics tools and memory aids to identify possible sepsis in the field, which would lead to early activation of a sepsis alert. The sepsis alert allows nurses and physicians to be ready to receive the patient and start the lifesaving treatment required for the illness.

(g) First Responder Program: Harris EMS supported the efforts of local fire departments through the first responder program and built a transition course for state credentialed personnel. Any credentialed first responders were able to transition by using Harris EMS Educational Institution at no charge.

(h) Medic 6 Qualla update: They noticed a substantial decrease in response times to the Qualla area since implementing this unit.

- Average 3rd quarter response times before Medic 6:
 - 14.93 minutes for emergent calls (Qualla area only).
 - 16.25 minutes for non-emergent calls (Qualla area only).
- Average 4th quarter response times with Medic 6:
 - 11.82 minutes for emergent calls (Qualla area only).
 - 13.95 minutes for non-emergent calls (Qualla area only).
- The reason they were not meeting the 10 minute average response time for emergent calls was due to the unit only being operational from 1000-2200. They still had increased response times between the hours of 2200-1000 in this area.
- Medic 6 ran 173 calls during the 4th quarter of 2016.

Harris EMS had seen a substantial increase in call volumes over the past four years. In 2013, the service ran 4,521 calls and in 2016, the service ran 5,610 calls. This was a 24% increase in call volume since 2013. In October of 2015, they added a 12 hour ambulance between the hours of 1000 and 2200, which offset the work load during the busiest times. However, between the hours of 2200 and 1000, they saw call volumes that taxed their service and often times exceeded resources on hand.

Overall, call volumes had steadily increased between the hours of 2200 and 1000 over the past four years. In 2013, Harris EMS ran 1,473 calls within those hours and in 2016 they ran 1,756 within these hours, which showed a 19% increase since 2013.

(i) Medic 6 – 24 proposal: Harris Regional Hospital EMS proposes to add an additional four FTEs to make the Medic 6 unit 24 hours. There would be no additional cost except the FTEs since the infrastructure was in place. They would continue to operate off of the current subsidy. If there was a loss or surplus at the end of the year, the county and Harris Regional Hospital would settle in pursuant of the current true-up agreement outlined in the contract.

Currently, they had a crew on call at night from the hours of 2200-0700, which was needed due to the volumes at night exceeded the capabilities of two crews. The backup crew was activated 60 times in 2016. This did not include times that all crews were on calls and there were no available ambulances. Very few services across the state had backup crews. It was difficult to find coverage for an on call crew for a variety of reasons.

If approved to make Medic 6 a 24 hour status, they plan to eliminate the backup crew. However, one of the EMS administrators would still continue to be on call during those hours. In the event of all three units being busy, this person would respond in a QRV until a transport unit was available to respond.

Harris EMS struggled with recruitment and retention for many years. Over the past two years they lost nine full time employees. During exit interviews, these employees stated one of the main reasons for leaving to seek employment elsewhere was due to the current schedule that Harris EMS worked. All of these employees left to work a 24/72 schedule.

The current schedule was favored many years ago due to the ability of the staff to have a nine day break each month. However, due to the increasing workload, many of the staff expressed concern with the current schedule. Currently, the staff was required to work a 24 hour shift followed by a 12 hour night shift, three times a month. Many staff members did not like the current configuration.

Currently, the most popular schedule used by EMS agencies, was the 24/72 schedule. They were unable to advertise that type of schedule and many potential applicants were turned away. Many of the current employees asked for this schedule change over the past couple of years. Of the 16 current employees, 14 wanted to change to a 24/72 schedule. Harris EMS had noticed substantial turnover due to the schedule that they currently used. It was estimated that the cost to train and equip a new employee was \$2,000. With the amount of turnover that EMS had, it was very expensive.

Harris EMS administration proposed to change to a 24/72 schedule, which would improve morale, increase recruitment and retention and reduce the cost of turnover within the service. Harris EMS administration felt confident that the schedule change would pay for itself with the reduction of turnover. They proposed to continue to operate off the current subsidy. If a loss or surplus was noted at the end of the year, the county and Harris Regional Hospital would settle pursuant to the current true-up agreement outlined in the contract.

(j) Current schedule compared to 24/72 schedule:

		<u>Current Schedule</u>	<u>24/72 Schedule</u>
	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Yearly</u>	<u>Yearly</u>
EMS Starting Paramedic Pay		\$39,902.72	\$40,809.60
Employer cost per employee Medical	\$915.39	\$10,984.68	\$10,984.68
Employer cost per employee Dental	\$51.27	\$615.24	\$615.24
Employer cost per employee Admin Fee	\$21.27	\$255.24	\$255.24
TOTAL		\$51,757.88	\$52,664.76
4 Additional FTE (starting pay)		\$207,031.52	\$210,659.04
Elimination of on call crew		(\$19,710.00)	(\$19,710.00)
		\$187,321.52	\$190,949.04

Total call back for 2016 for the on call crew was \$5,921.60.

(k) Schedule change cost:

<u>Current Schedule</u>	<u>Hourly Rate</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Starting paramedic pay	\$17.44	76	\$1,325.44
Paramedic overtime	\$26.16	8	\$209.28
Total per pay period			\$1,534.72
Total year (26 pay periods)			\$39,902.72
<u>24/72 Schedule</u>			
Starting paramedic pay	\$17.44	144	\$2,511.36
Paramedic overtime	\$26.16	24	\$627.84
Total per pay period			\$3,139.20
Total year (13 pay periods)			\$40,809.60
Approximate cost of schedule change without additional FTE			\$14,510.08

Base salary increase for starting paramedic \$906.88.

Base salary increase before benefits 2.27% per employee.

Mr. Adams requested a breakdown of calls during peak and off peak times for Medic 6. Relating the benefit directly received with the additional funds. How many calls do they believe they could achieve the ten minute goal in that area. If they can show an improvement as it associates with the cost.

Informational item.

(2) FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION AT PANTHERTOWN: Present for discussions: Sharon Taylor, Executive Director of Mainspring Conservation Trust and Margaret Carton, Board President of Friends of Panthertown.

Ms. Taylor presented:

(a) Mainspring Conservation Trust was celebrating 20 years as stewards of the Southern Blue Ridge. Recent activity included:

- NC Needmore Game Lands on the Little Tennessee River 5,000+ acres in Macon and Swain counties;
- Wood Heirs property nearby USFS land and significant natural heritage areas;
- Hipp/Panthertown – Jackson County.

Ms. Carton presented:

(b) Friends of Panthertown Mission: work in partnership with the US Forest Service to conserve Panthertown Valley while improving the quality of the experience of recreational opportunities in this outstanding natural resource.

- Maintain 30 miles of official trails in Panthertown Valley through open work days, Adopt-a-Trail, partnership work days, and volunteer efforts.
- Provide education to members, recreational users, and interested groups about Panthertown Valley; Leave No Trace Program; and area geography, flora and fauna.
- Fundraise to support our activities.

(c) Evolution:

- 2003 Panthertown Trail Project Planning by USFS.
- 2005 Jackson-Macon County Alliance works with volunteers to establish relationship with USFS – Friends of Panthertown.
- 2007 J-MCA hires coordinator for Friends of Panthertown and formalizes USFS volunteer agreement.
- 2011 Friends of Panthertown recognized as an independent 501(c)(3) organization.

(d) Salt Rock Property Improvement Plan:

- Phase I – during Mainspring ownership – initial parking prep:
 - Clear flat land in acquisition Property near gate.
 - Grade area.
 - Grade access road near entrance.
 - Evaluate education area and install if appropriate location identified
- Phase II – after transfer to USFS
 - Apply for RTP Grant with USFS
 - Finish grading for parking lot
 - Gravel parking area
 - Finish improvements to access road

(e) Budget for acquisition, April 21st closing date:

- Purchase price \$191,000 (appraised FMV)
- Transaction costs \$4,000 (survey, legal, title insurance)
- Total \$195,000
- Partners:
 - Mainspring and FPT staff and volunteer time and travel
 - 94 donations to date = \$50,186
 - Matching donation = \$50,186
- Balance to close = \$94,628

Chairman McMahan stated that the county looked for ways to provide opportunities for citizens to enjoy recreation activities, such as the community parks, etc. This would be another way for the county to contribute and provide for citizens to have access to a crown jewel in the county. The Board could consider making an appropriation out of the Conservation Preservation Recreation Fund to expand this opportunity.

Consensus: *Add this item to the April 3rd regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(3) PROPOSED LEASE OF OLD CHAMBER BUILDING: Present for discussions: Robert Jumper, TDA Chairman and Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director. A proposed lease was presented between the county and Jackson County Tourism Development Authority for 116 Central Street in Sylva.

Mr. Jumper stated they had been looking for office space and a representation for the TDA that they had not had before. Since they had added a staff member, they were actively searching for office space for Mr. Breedlove, when this opportunity presented itself.

Mr. Breedlove stated the existing office space was very small and they had outgrown it. They were looking for a space they could operate efficiently in and allow for meetings and an appropriate space for the public.

Mr. Adams stated that this space was the old Chamber Building. The TDA Board and legal had reviewed the proposed lease. The lease amount would be \$500 per month for a one year lease. From a maintenance standpoint, the county would maintain the grass and all of the outside elements. If the TDA wanted some renovations inside, the TDA would provide the material and the county would provide help to set up. The TDA would be required to obtain liability insurance that would name the county as an additional insured. The TDA would be responsible for trash pickup, utilities, pest control, etc.

Ms. Baker stated that a couple of minor changes that would be made to the lease:

- *Paragraph 7. ... ~~When possible,~~ Lessor's maintenance personnel will be available to assist Lessee with the normal repairs and maintenance on the interior of the premises.*
- *Paragraph 25. In preparation of this Lease, Lessor has been represented by its attorney, Heather C. Baker and Lessee has been ~~advised and had sufficient time to hire its own attorney~~ represented by Michele D. Smith, Attorney at Law to review this Agreement for them.*

Consensus: *Add this item to the March 20th regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(4) FALSE ALARM ISSUES: Michael Forbis, Fire Marshall, stated that emergency resources in the county were being consumed at a disturbing rate when dealing with alarm responses. In 2016, fire alarm activations accounted for 558 volunteer fire department responses spread across the seven fire districts. The number tripled for county law enforcement personnel. Residential security alarms accounted for 950 responses and commercial accounted for 596, totaling 1,546. Estimates show that regardless of fire alarm type, commercial alarms are false a minimum of 76% of the time. The rate increases to more than 95% for residential. When dealing with such high numbers of false alarms, emergency personnel are often prioritizing calls and giving alarms a lesser urgency.

An alarm was any signal of communication generated by an alarm system, which prompts a response by emergency services in the county. False alarms are activations without justified reason or cause. A popular proposed solution was an alarm registration process for all new and/or existing alarm systems, whether residential or commercial. Through education and accountability, their goal was to reduce the number of repetitive false activations, therefore increasing the effectiveness of emergency services and maximizing resources made available to the public.

Mr. Adams stated he was working on a new policy that would allow for open conversations with staff and the Board to discuss issues or concerns that would require an ordinance, before showing up with an ordinance for the Board's consideration.

The purpose would not be to fine people, but to try, through education, have people work with the county on these issues. He recommended they investigate encompassing a process, with fire inspections and the permitting office, so that when units were installed initially, this issue could be addressed with best practices.

Consensus: *Move forward with the process.*

(5) RECYCLING COMMITTEE UPDATE: Ms. Baker stated that Chad Parker, Public Works Director, had applied for a \$5,000 grant with the Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service. Mr. Parker worked with Rusty Ellis, Parks and Recreation Department Director, to go to all of the county facilities to determine where recycling containers were missing. With the grant, they would cover every area maintained by the county, including all office space. Also, they were working with WCU's Marketing Department on a marketing strategy and logo. The Early College was willing to get involved with the effort, so they were hopeful to include SCC and the school system in upcoming discussions.

Informational item.

(6) FACILITY NAMING POLICY: Mr. Adams stated that the purpose of the policy was to establish a consistent approach for the naming of county facilities. Facilities included all real property assets under the county's ownership and control, including buildings, structures, open spaces, public parks and natural areas.

(a) Objectives:

- Provide an appropriate name for each facility.
- Ensure that facilities are easily identified and located.
- Ensure that given names to facilities relate to their location and function.
- Recognize extraordinary contributions and connections with individuals, groups and organizations when appropriate.
- Ensure consistent approach in naming facilities and/or the features within the facilities.
- Provide criteria for the process of naming facilities and/or the features within the facilities.
- Provide for a process to request the naming of a facility and/or the features within the facilities.

(b) Criteria: The following criteria shall be used in determining the appropriateness of the naming designation:

- Description of the function of the facility.
- Recognition of distinct geographic location (neighborhood, significant areas, etc.).
- Recognizing natural features, prominent geographic features or local reference points.
- Commemorating a historic event or event of cultural significance.
- Recognizing an individual, group or organization that is particularly identified with the land or facility.
- Recognizing an individual, group or organization that contributed significantly to the acquisition or development of the facility and/or the features within the facility.
- Recognizing outstanding accomplishments by an individual, group or organization for the good of the community. These accomplishments should relate directly to the purpose of the facility.

- Recognizing an individual, group or organization of historical or cultural significance.

(c) When applying these criteria, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Consideration must be given to incorporate language in the name that assists in the identification of the facility's intended use (i.e. park, greenway, library, animal control, administration).
- It is also desirable to incorporate more than one criteria listed above within a proposed name.
- Features and spaces within a park or facility (playground, picnic shelter, plaza, garden, meeting room, etc.) can be named separately from a park or facility. Such features and spaces are especially well suited to be named after an individual, group or organization who contributed significantly to the acquisition or development of the facility and/or specific features within the facility.
- Entire facilities may be named after an individual, group or organization. The request to name an entire facility after an individual, group or organization should be vetted thoroughly. It must be demonstrated that an individual, group or organization has significantly contributed to the acquisition/development of the facility and/or has had significant accomplishments as it relates to the purpose of the facility and/or has historical/cultural significance in the community.
- Recognition of individuals, groups or organizations whose contributions have been appropriately recognized in other county venues or by other means shall be avoided.
- Corporate names shall not be considered for the naming of facilities under this policy.
- Proposed names that are similar to other facility names in the county should not be considered in order to minimize confusion.

(d) Procedures:

- Internal Staff Procedures: All proposed names for new county facilities will be generated by management teams established by the County Manager. Staff will only focus on the naming of the entire facility and will not initiate the naming of any features within the facility. All names generated by the management teams will focus solely on the following criteria:
 - Description of the function of the facility.
 - Recognition of distinct geographic location (neighborhood, significant areas, etc.).
 - Recognizing natural features, prominent geographic features or local reference points.
 - Commemorating a historic event or event of cultural significance.

Once a recommended name has been established by the management team, the County Manager will present to the County Commissioners for final approval.

- External Request Procedures: A request for the naming of a facility or any features of a facility shall be submitted in writing to the County Manager's Office. The request shall include:
 - The facility or feature to be named.
 - The proposed name.
 - Reasons for the proposed name and how the proposed name meets the criteria of this policy.
 - Evidence of community support for the proposed facility name.

Once the request is received and evaluated in accordance with this policy, the County Manager will forward recommendations to the County Commissioners for final decision. The County Manager / Commissioners may defer a facility name request to any group or board for recommendations as deemed appropriate.

(e) If a facility name request is deferred to another group for recommendation, then that group shall:

- Review the nomination in accordance with this policy.
- Research, review and study the supporting documentation. Such research may include verification of historical or factual content; and/or when deemed appropriate, invite concerned/impacted community groups to provide comment regarding the selection of a park or facility name.
- Forward recommendations to the County Commissioners for final decision.

(f) Renaming of Facilities: The renaming of facilities is strongly discouraged. Renaming of facilities carries with it a much greater burden of process compared to initial naming. Tradition and continuity of name and community are important community values. Each application must meet the criteria in this policy along with the following additional criteria:

- Only parks and facilities named for geographic location, outstanding features and/or purpose should be considered for renaming.
- Parks and facilities named after individuals, groups or organizations shall not be changed unless it is found that because of their character the continued use of their name would not be in the best interest of the community.
- The procedure for requesting a facility name change is as follows:
 - A request for renaming of a facility shall be submitted in writing to the County Manager.
 - The request shall include the proposed name change, the purpose of the change, and how the proposed name change is consistent with the criteria established by this policy.
 - The County Manager shall forward recommendations to the Commissioners for final decision.

(g) Additional Information: It is the intent of the Jackson County Board of Commissioners to adhere to this policy. This policy is not intended to limit any individual Board member's ability to initiate a process to name a facility and/or features within a facility. This policy will be used as a guide for the Jackson County Board of Commissioners when an individual Board member initiates a discussion to name a facility and/or features within a facility.

Commissioner Mau requested language be added concerning initially seeking permission from a family member.

Commissioner Deitz stated that this could be a controversial or political issue.

Chairman McMahan stated that he would not suggest to start naming existing buildings, etc., but thought it would be good to have a policy in place if an opportunity did present itself in the future. He thought it was a good policy and was in line with what the county had done in the past.

Consensus: *Commissioners to further review. Mr. Adams to present any changes or modifications at a future work session.*

(7) JONES/HODGINS PROPERTY DILLIGENCE UPDATE: Mr. Adams presented a summary of environmental assessments for property located at 700 Skyland Drive, Sylva:

(a) Surveying: Burns Land Surveying \$800: For a base flood elevation determination. It had been determined that the majority of the property had been raised to or above the base flood elevation. Grading with minimal additional fill would be necessary to allow for a finished floor to be built two feet above the base flood elevation. Additional construction requirements, as it relates to the flood plain, would not be necessary for the project with the minimal additional fill.

- (b) Geotechnical Exploration – compaction and fill:
 - ECS Southeast, LLP \$4,985: Six test borings to be advanced 20 feet each. Total of 120 linear feet of drilling.
 - BLE, Inc. \$4,900: Ten test borings. Nine borings would be extended to depths of 20 feet. One boring would be extended up to 50 feet in depth to determine the seismic site classification of the site. Total of 230 linear feet of drilling.
- (c) Phase II and Phase II:
 - ECS Southeast, LLP:
 - Phase I: \$2,000. Must perform Phase I before going to Phase II.
 - Phase II: \$13,020. Seven soil samples and three ground water samples.
 - BLE, Inc.:
 - Phase I: Willing to go straight to Phase II.
 - Phase II: \$13,500. Ten soil samples and five ground water samples.

Mr. Adams suggested they move forward with BLE, Inc. for the Geotechnical Exploration. After completion of the Geotechnical Exploration, they could look at Phases I and II.

Ms. Baker stated that the title exam was in progress and they should have in the next week or so. Also, they would need to talk with the railroad to make sure they would have approved access over the existing crossing the property.

Consensus: *Move forward with BLE, Inc. for the Geotechnical Exploration.*

(8) GLENVILLE-CASHIERS EMS UPDATE: Chairman McMahan inquired if an update was built into the contract with Glenville-Cashiers EMS.

Ms. Baker stated it was not built into the contract, but they could request they update the Board at any time, but they usually came during the budget process and gave an update.

Informational item.

(9) UPCOMING MEETINGS: Mr. Adams requested that the April 11th work session start at 10:00 am instead of 1:00 pm. Also, he requested a special meeting for capital projects.

Consensus: *Begin the April 11th work session at 10:00 am and set a special meeting for capital projects on Wednesday, March 22nd at 1:00 p.m. in Room A227.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Mau moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Luker seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman