

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JUNE 13, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on June 13, 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 called the meeting to order.

Mr. Adams stated that the primary focus of the meeting was for budgetary discussions. The proposed FY2017-18 Budget had been provided to the Board for review.

(1) **NON-PROFITS**: Mr. Adams stated that several non-profits contacted him after seeing the recommendations and requested to come back before the Board. He recommended they write a letter to the Board and then the Board would choose the next step.

Two non-profits followed through and wrote letters:

- Southwestern Child Development Commission, Inc., regarding the Nurse Family Partnership Program. He did share with Shelia Hoyle, Executive Director, the last discussion the Board had on this item was to wait and see what other counties decided to do and also the Board wanted to have more information on grants they were seeking, such as matching requirements. Ms. Hoyle was welcome to come back and present to the Board at a later date.
- Circles of Hope. The budget already contained funding for Circles of Hope.

Chairman McMahan stated that in his opinion, they should not take up these items, at that time. He thought they could put them on the agenda at a later time. He was not in favor of increasing their funding before adopting the Budget.

Commissioner Luker stated he was also approached by a representative of Teen Challenge. They were concerned that they had applied multiple years, including that year, but was not granted.

Ms. Fox stated she had not received an application for them and maybe they applied through another program in the county. She would be glad to make contact with them and research the matter.

Chairman McMahan stated he had been contacted regarding the Barkers Creek Community Building. They needed a re-roofing project that they had previously gotten numbers for. They needed to decide if they wanted to do the project in-house or contract it out. They were waiting on a letter from them, but Mr. Adams had stated they did have funds in the budget to accomplish the project. After adoption of the budget, they could ask Barkers Creek to write a letter of request.

Mr. Adams stated that in the CDC Budget there was \$10,000 for special requests, such as this one for facility maintenance, etc.

Commissioner Luker stated that he had been contacted regarding the Tuckasegee VFW building. He thought it was a joint collaboration between the Cullowhee Fire Department and VFW. They invited the Board to have a meeting there in August or September to see what they had accomplished so far. Their main goal was to bring the building into ADA compliance. They wanted to do a fundraiser with a cost-share with the county.

Ms. Fox stated they did fund them \$10,000 for that project in the current year's budget. Also, they had \$1,500 set aside in the proposed budget.

Chairman McMahan stated they could look at September for a meeting at the Tuckasegee VFD.
Informational item.

(2) PARRIS CABIN PROJECT: Mr. Adams stated that it was thought this project could be handle with the normal maintenance budget, but when they started getting quotes back from the engineer, the repairs discussed would be an estimated cost of \$95,560. They thought they could cut down on some of the soft cost allowance.

It was recommended to retain as much flat area near the cabin as possible to allow the public access to walk around the cabin. Also, they also wanted to be good neighbors, making sure water was not running down onto the neighbor's property. The water would be taken to the fountain connecting to the existing storm drainage. They also needed some type of fence for privacy and safety.

These items would reserve the entire area and allow the space to be used, then and in the future and it would also protect in regards to erosion, the neighbors below and the public safety.

Chairman McMahan stated that it had been mentioned to him about adding a small amphitheater, which would be a great place for outdoor programs to take place.

Mr. Adams stated that in the budget message he mentioned they put in a higher contingency than normal. There were two ways they could fund the project:

- Increase fund balance appropriation; or
- Reduce the additional contingency for next year.

Ms. Fox recommended to go ahead and take the funds out of contingency and place it in the budget.
Informational item.

(3) BOARD OF ELECTIONS VOTING EQUIPMENT: Mr. Adams stated that the bill that could have provided grants for up to 50% of the cost of the voting equipment, had been stalled. If the Board chose to move forward in the next fiscal year, it would be a cost in that year. He recommended they invite the Board of Elections back in the next couple of months when they had more information from the state, such as type of machine, training, cost and an implementation timeline.

One issue may be that the Board of Elections may want to proceed forward next year in order to be proactive with having the machines in place for a test run during the primary to ensure the general election would run smoother. However, the new machines would not have to be in place until the general election in November, 2018. This would allow for one more year for possible grants from the state to be available, as the bill may come up again next year.

Informational item.

(4) DEPARTMENT ON AGING: Ms. Fox stated that there was an error on Page 101 of the budget, showing a Senior Center Fitness Expense as \$500. The department requested this amount, but the correct amount of the request should be \$5,000, which was a continuing amount. They would need to take \$4,500 from contingency to correct the error.

Informational item.

(5) FY2018-22 FACILITIES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP): Mr. Adams stated that on the regular meeting agenda for Monday, along with the budget ordinance, he would also have the CIP for adoption.

Commissioner Elders inquired about the animal shelter timeline.

Mr. Adams stated that based on previous discussions by the Board, the CIP shows that the project had been moved up to start planning next year.

Chairman McMahan stated they would need to have a work session in the near future for the Board to come to a consensus on upcoming projects to get them going.

Commissioner Luker inquired why would they go ahead and approve the CIP before having discussions in a work session, since they may change the timeline of the CIP.

Chairman McMahan stated that the CIP only stated what projects they had approved for the next five years.

Mr. Adams stated there were multiple approval parts to the CIP. On the county side, it was about putting a plan in place so that he could start planning for the projects, such as reaching out to engineers and architects. The Board would still have to approve the final estimates, etc. As far as the schools, if they budget the \$1.4 mil and the other \$1 mil, there would be no other follow-up approval for them to access those funds. If it were a project the county was managing, there would have to be a project ordinance.

Commissioner Mau stated that last he heard about the QZAB projects, one of them came in at \$500,000 over the estimate. Now JCPS was starting to think about how they were going to prioritize the items on the list. With that in mind, he had a tough time allocating the \$1.4 mil to a softball field and track when they were unsure if funds already allocated to fix the air conditioners and roofs was enough. He wondered if they should hold off until next year to get more information, since they were struggling with whether or not they will have enough dollars to do it all.

Commissioner Luker inquired if they did have over runs, would they be able to use the \$1.4 mil for that?

Ms. Fox stated that the Commissioners would have to approve the projects that they were doing because the county was managing those projects. A project ordinance amendment would have to be done to move money from one project to another.

Chairman McMahan stated that the CIP was just a placeholder or plan. They were saying they were going to give immediate access to the \$1.4 mil. There could be cost overruns and they may have to come back and amend the plan in the future.

Mr. Adams stated that potentially, in the next year, there could be an overlap of the \$9 mil projects and the \$1.4 mil projects.

Commissioner Luker stated that there were overruns and there were still outstanding projects. He was not against making a placeholder for it, but not necessarily approving it to move forward until they knew where they were on the \$9 mil.

Mr. Adams stated that if the Board wanted to know about the \$9 mil before moving forward with the other projects, when they had a clear understanding at the end of the \$9 mil was when they could start accessing the \$1.4 mil.

Commissioner Mau stated those were the most critical needs that they identified a year and a half ago and they were trying to prioritize within those. He thought they needed to figure out how to get all of those items done.

Commissioner Deitz stated he did not believe they should even think about going on to the second phase until they finish the first one because it was important and they wanted to see it done.

Ms. Fox stated that they did have savings on some of the projects and she was hopeful it would even out.

Mr. Adams stated this request came in with the assumption they would be able to get all other projects accomplished with the \$9 mil. They could reserve the funds and they would not be available until a later date. That was the point of voting on the CIP, so that the correct message went to the school that the Board would prefer to wait to see where they were really going to end up on the \$9 mil. Also, those funds would be available to finish up the \$9 mil, if needed, or any other project.

Chairman McMahan stated they could adopt the CIP and show those amounts in the school capital reserve with no figures dedicated to projects, with the understanding that the county wanted to monitor the \$9 mil renovations and as they received updates, they could at that point free up some of the funds to start other projects. He requested to get an update on projects from the JCPS at an upcoming meeting.

Mr. Adams stated there may be a need for a special work session in July to discuss the health department. Also, there may be a need to set up a special meeting in August to discuss the animal shelter.

Informational item.

(6) FY2017-18 PROPOSED BUDGET: Chairman McMahan inquired if anyone had questions or comments regarding the regular budget.

(a) Departmental goals and accomplishments:

Commissioner Luker stated he wanted to discuss departmental goals and accomplishments. He thought that over the last six months, all of the Commissioners had mentioned different goals and achievements they wanted like to see. As they adopt the budget, he wanted to see a listing of goals and accomplishments, as a Board, going into the 17-18 budget year, such as the health department, animal shelter and one-stop. He thought the general public would want to see and know their concerns were being addressed.

Chairman McMahan stated most of those items had already been done for them in some ways, especially if they approved the CIP. At the next work session, they could take that opportunity to talk about the topics to list on work session agendas that they would like to discuss and come to some kind of conclusion in the upcoming year.

Mr. Adams stated that last year's goals was a first step of the performance measurement process. The departments were given different instructions as they looked at goals for next year. The Administration Departmental Goals for FY2017-18, on pages 18-19, #2 of the proposed budget were as follows:

2. Personnel:

a. Reinstitute salary recommendations from the previous salary study. This is to be accomplished over two fiscal years.

b. Work with Board and Human Resources Department to complete and adopt updates to the Jackson County Human Resource Manual.

c. Work with Board and Human Resources Department to update the Jackson County's Drug-Free Workplace Policy to include random drug screening for safety sensitive employees.

3. Develop and begin implementing a departmental performance measurement system. It is anticipated that full implementation would take two fiscal years. Once fully implemented a performance measurement system will always need to be updated annually.

4. Capital Improvement Planning:

a. Begin implementing FY 2018-22 Facility Capital Improvement Plan once adopted. Identify/decide on location for Health Department and Animal Shelter and begin design. Completion of Health Department and Animal Shelter design will be dependent upon when location is decided. Begin and complete design for Justice Center renovations.

b. Implement asset management program.

c. Complete 5 year CIP for equipment, vehicles and ongoing maintenance.

5. Complete Skyland Services Center renovations.

6. Continue to investigate best practices in regards to consolidation of development permitting.

7. Develop additional partnerships with Western Carolina University. Develop agreement with the College of Engineering & Technology to assist with updating the asset management program. Work with others at WCU such as the College of Business and the College of Fine & Performing Arts to evaluate the Green Energy Park.

8. Develop a request for proposal/bid to provide solid waste services. Contracts will be ending in December 2018. The RFP/B will be issued at the end of FY2017-18 or soon into FY2018-19.
9. Develop and implement a Jackson County Citizenship Academy. This is a detailed educational program that is designed to inform citizens who are interested in learning more about their local government.
10. Perform any other duties that may be required or authorized by the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Adams stated that if they were going to set aside the next meeting for goals and objectives, he recommended they read everyone's goals and objectives and then as a Board decide what their priorities were. From what he had heard, from the Board's conversations, the above was what he thought he needed to be spending his time on, other than day to day operations.

Commissioner Mau stated that there were a lot of goals in the Comprehensive Plan and the Board may want to take a look at those before the next work session.

Chairman McMahan stated that at the next work session, to plan on adding any additional to the list, if needed.

(b) Capital purchases and local contractors, etc.:

Commissioner Luker stated that a couple of processes that he would be interested in changing as they moved into next year would be to look at capital purchases, such as when looking at vehicles, etc. that would be brought to the Board for approval.

Mr. Adams stated there were certain authorities, under the budget ordinance, that allowed himself and the finance officer to transfer funds around and purchase equipment, etc., for day to day operations and that he would recommend they allow them to have that ability. Were there thresholds they wanted for items to come back to the governing body and what would that thresholds be. This would be when items were added to the originally adopted budget.

Commissioner Luker stated that his issue was with anything that was outside of what was typically approved in the budget that funds were moved around for.

Ms. Fox stated that vehicles were purchased in the upcoming budget that had been requested because there was extra money outstanding that year that helped balance the budget.

Commissioner Luker stated a knowledge of that would be great for Commissioners with Ms. Fox's monthly reports.

Ms. Fox stated that any of those types of transfers were included in the contingency report that she presented to the Board.

Commissioner Elders stated he would not want to see the request for everything, but if the question should arise, he would like it explained to the Board, why, if they had qualified dealers or something could be done in the county, he wanted it to be proven to the Board why they would go out of state. He knew there were times they would have to do so, but explain why the money was not spent at home. Money kept in the county would go back into the base, where if they were out of state, it would not.

Mr. Adams stated that there were certain laws they had to abide by, but there were certain things that could be done to encourage and improve local involvement.

Commissioner Deitz stated he knew there were certain rules they had to abide by, but he agreed anytime they could trade in the community, they should.

Chairman McMahan stated there was no debate on that, but the issue was when people or companies reside outside of the county were the low bidder. Unless there was a reason why they could not go with the low bid, it was difficult to justify to the taxpayer why they would go with a higher bid.

Commissioner Elders agreed, but stated if it were just a few dollars difference, the county would come out ahead in the long run by using local people and keeping that money at home.

Commissioner Luker stated that he would like to at least have the knowledge of funds being transferred and what they were going to do with it for amounts such as \$100,000, for example. Also, he was hearing complaints about bids for projects where an individual department may have 3-4 throughout the year and maybe that individual department head was using the same person. But was that fair to other small business contractors in the county that did not have an opportunity to bid.

Mr. Adams recommended allowing himself and Ms. Fox to have a conversation to get a better understanding of the county processes. Generally speaking, when they had smaller projects, they had a policy to get multiple bids and they did not look outside the county, but they would review the policy. Also, any business was welcome to call and give their information to him or Ms. Fox so that they could send it to maintenance, recreation and other departments that had to go out on a regular basis.

Commissioner Mau suggested that a pre-qualification process may be helpful in the process.

(c) School resource officers and additional grounds position:

Commissioner Luker stated he wanted to see if they could figure out a way to make a few things happen, the first, was the three school resource officers. He spoke with Sheriff Hall, who served on the Board that approved the grants and the likelihood of receiving the grant was very good, but that did not get them started at the beginning of the school year. How could they find a way to fund this to make that happen at the beginning of the school year and move forward until the grants came in.

Secondly, he wanted to discuss an additional position for grounds. After speaking with several maintenance department employees, more responsibilities had been added to those guys with the additional parks, fire departments, schools, etc. and it was possible the maintenance department could sacrifice other items in their budget to have funds towards gaining an additional employee.

Ms. Fox stated that regarding the school resource officers, if they got the grants, they required new officers be hired for those positions, they could not hire them now or they would have to hire three more officers if they received the grant. The grant would pay for the officers for 2-3 years. The officers would be used at Cullowhee Valley, Scotts Creek and Fairview. Also, the vehicles would be in addition.

Commissioner Luker stated that put a different perspective on it, as that was not how it was told to him. Would they be willing to appropriate funds to the Sheriff for current officers to work overtime to cover those positions until September to see if they would get the grant.

Mr. Adams stated in conversations with the Sheriff, he was willing to wait until September and if need be, he was willing to prioritize. He did have a plan in place depending on how the grants came in. They asked him to see what it would take to have a police presence at all schools.

Chairman McMahan stated he felt it was worth waiting until September, then revisit the issue and invite the Sheriff to come to a work session and let him present to the Board his plan. Also, there were funds set aside for overtime currently for the Sheriff's budget.

Mr. Adams stated that they did have a list of a lot of positions. He met with all of the departments and as a group, the priority was the implantation of the steps, even with that costing potentially the ability to look at new positions, etc. This was the reason they did not have other departments coming to them asking for those type things, because as a group, they said their priority was the implementation of the salary schedule. Also, he did not have conversations regarding giving up operations for the additional maintenance position.

Chairman McMahan stated that personally, he trusted the process and thought they had a sound budget process where the County Manager and Finance Officer met and evaluated the requests. They went through a long, detailed process where a lot of time was put in the requests and at the end of the day, a decision was made and at that time, he was fully supportive of the decision not to move forward with the position.

Commissioner Luker stated he was ok with that, but felt he needed to bring items he had been approached about to the table for discussion as that was what he felt he was elected to do. He trusted the process that Ms. Fox and Mr. Adams had gone through.

Mr. Adams stated that he did have an agreement with the Public Works Director, that when Skyland Service Center came on, he would come back and recommend to the Board to add another housekeeping position.

(d) Commissioner raise:

Commissioner Mau requested that the Board of Commissioners not receive the proposed 2% raise for the upcoming FY2017-18 year.

Informational item.

Mr. Adams stated that at the next regular meeting, he would present the budget ordinance and the revised version of the CIP, as discussed today, for consideration.

There being no further business, Commissioner Luker moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman