

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
SEPTEMBER 12, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on September 12, 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.

Commissioner Luker stated that he had toured a partial section of his District that morning in Cashiers to see the damage from the remnants of Hurricane Irma. They did have devastation in several areas of the county and the Fire Departments, Emergency Services Personnel and Utility Crews had been doing a phenomenal job. He had approximately 15 trucks stop by his store that morning from Besco Electric out of Knoxville, TN, with about 50 more to follow, headed into Cashiers to help clear, repair and rebuild the lines. He had a lot of residents ask what they could do. He thought the best thing was to don't get out, unless they had to so that the power and roads could be cleared.

Also, he encouraged everyone that did have power to show the true Jackson County hospitality by offering a cup of coffee or a sandwich, as those workers were from out of town working to help the communities and they were very much appreciated. That morning, the ones that came through the Caney Fork General Store received their items for nothing. He was glad to have them here helping.

(1) COLD WEATHER SHELTER: Mr. Adams stated that the county went into contract with Southwestern Child Development to handle the upcoming cold weather season and case management. The Task Force, which was made up of six members, was charged to give the Board potential options on how to proceed forward with a homeless shelter.

Marilyn Chamberlin, Director of Operations, Southwestern Child Development presented:

(a) Homeless shelter planning process: Three options from the Task Force:

- Hotel model - currently using:
 - Up to ten rooms during cold months
 - Staff office off-site needed
 - Transportation was higher due to off-site office
- Shelter – actual brick and mortar:
 - Two or three wings for families, women and men
 - Residents do the work related to the shelter to cut costs
 - Assume a building was available - renovations, purchase or build – costs up to \$1mil
- Hybrid of the above.

They felt that the hybrid option may be the best so that they would have an actual brick and mortar homeless shelter and could use hotel rooms in certain situations, such as with sex offenders and violent criminals.

They researched how other shelters across the state were ran in other Tier 1 Counties, like Jackson and they also looked at Tier 2 Counties, but learned that there were no patterns as they were all different based on funding models. They did not find a set of best practices to use for a homeless shelter.

They derived a series of core elements that would be used no matter which option was chosen, such as background checks and drug and alcohol testing. They had a working budget at the time, as there were items they could not answer currently. All options were based on having a director of the program and a part-time case manager. There were a lot of unknowns with the shelter model, such as if a building already existed, etc.

Mr. Adams stated that the Task Force would be providing a written report of each of the models with potential pros and cons of each. This would give the Board a glimpse of what was to come and would frame the discussion for the Board and the community. There were a lot of people in the community that wished to have input into the conversation. The idea of the initial Task Force was not to decide the best model, rather provide information to the Board for each model so that the Board and the community had the necessary information for a starting point. The Board could then make a decision based on the information provided and input from the community as to which model would be the best fit for the community.

Chairman McMahan stated that when they received a formal written report, the Board would review it, engage community partners and have a community-wide dialogue about what the county and the community wanted to support. They would need to discuss who the partners were and who would be willing to participate in sharing with the cost, whether that be in-kind or monetary. At some point, this would put them in a position next year, as they went through the budget, to make a decision.

(b) Preparation for the cold weather season. For that calendar year, they would continue the hotel model that was in place. They were in the process of hiring two part-time people. One would help now to set up and get ready and the other would start on November 1st. They already had a full-time case manager and they were in the process of negotiating contracts with hotels. Also, they were reevaluating their policies and procedures. From a budgetary standpoint, they thought they would be able to cover their expenses with the funds they had received from the county, donations and grants. Their goal would be to get people re-housed and out of the hotel as soon as possible.

(c) Case management statistics:

- From April to August 31st, they served 29 households, which was about half of what they served during the cold season.
- They did not put them in hotels, but tried to get them re-housed. From November through August 31st they helped a total of 147 people, which included 47 children.
- 78% of households had been placed in permanent housing.

Mr. Adams requested information be given to the county that would have basic contact information that could be shared with individuals that needed help during the cold weather season.

Chairman McMahan stated that this was an enormous task that was not only a problem in major metropolitan areas, but homelessness existed nationwide, even in rural communities like theirs.

Informational item.

(2) **THE COMMUNITY TABLE**: Charles Easton, Chairman, presented the 2016 quick facts:

- Served 25,991 meals and distributed 12,216 boxes of groceries to 4,551 unduplicated Jackson County residents.
- 36% of those served were children.
- The other most served groups were elderly and disabled people on fixed incomes.
- Average cost per meal \$0.39 (food cost only).
- Average cost per box of groceries \$3.09 (food cost only)
- Average cost per meal including all overhead expenses \$2.91.
- Average cost per box of groceries including all overhead expenses \$8.47.
- Distributed over 310,000 pounds of food.

- 2017 year-to-date totals: January – August, they served 18,227 meals and distributed 9,989 boxes of groceries.

Informational item.

(3) SAVANNAH PARK: Mr. Adams stated that a Request for Construction Bids went out for Savannah Park. The bids were due on September 7th and they received only one bid. At that point, they had chosen not to proceed forward with that bid. He had a conversation with Darlene Fox, Finance Director and Rusty Ellis, Recreation and Parks Director and they reached out to some local contractors regarding the project, but they were unable to bid at the time. They did get some indications that if they waited and rebid later, the local contractors could be available in the spring.

At that point, staff recommended to wait, talk to local contractors and get the bids out in a couple of months to get the project started in the spring.

Consensus: *Proceed with staff's recommendation.*

(4) COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER: Mr. Adams stated this was a follow-up from their previous meeting regarding the programming for the proposed new Health Department. After that work session regarding locating Code Enforcement and Planning within the Health Department facility itself, he had meetings with Health Department Staff, Inspections Code Enforcement Staff and Planning Staff to start preparing for the future discussion. He also contacted Ron Smith and requested that he put together a proposal.

He presented the proposal from McMillan, Pazdan, Smith Architecture for the renovation of the Community Service Center to accommodate the Health Department, the Permitting and Code Enforcement Department and the Planning Department.

The Scope of Services was that McMillan, Pazdan, Smith would meet with the Permitting and Code Enforcement Department Staff and the Planning Department Staff to develop a spatial allocation program for their needs. Upon approval of the County Manager and Department Heads, McMillan, Pazdan, Smith would develop a conceptual plan for the building to house the three departments. A revised project cost estimated would be included. They could begin work within ten business days of the Notice to Proceed. The Architectural/Engineering Fee for the work described above \$9,860. Reimbursable Expenses, not to exceed \$600.00.

Commissioner Deitz stated that since the last meeting, he had talked to a few contractors and also individuals that built houses themselves. He also talked with Security Personnel at the Justice Center. Most people thought One-Stop was a good idea, but their main issue was about how slow some of the processes were and they wished that more of the process could be done electronically and more efficiently.

In talking to the Security Personnel, they stated there had never had a problem with anyone taking off their belt or coming through security. It had been mentioned that if there was a problem with people coming through security and they come often, they could check them and give them a pass so that they could come through, which may solve some of those issues. He thought they could solve this by having one person taking applications and they would get the information sent to where it needed to go.

Commissioner Elders stated he also had talked to several contractors that complimented him for taking One-Stop into consideration and they stated they would like to see One-Stop be done. He had not heard from anyone that did not want to see this done.

Chairman McMahan stated it would be interesting to see at the end of the process, what the total cost was going to be to accomplish the One-Stop. He was all for the One-Stop, if it could be done and it was equitable and economically feasible. It was a great concept and he was supportive of it, but at the end of the day and they spend untold thousands of dollars to put it into place, was the cost worth the benefit.

Commissioner Luker stated that on the opposite perspective, how would they quantify the cost savings to those taxpayers for being able to get everything streamlined into one area. Also, he agreed with Commissioner Deitz on technology, but unfortunately, they were not there. There were still a number of folks that do not use devices, such as smart phones.

Commissioner Deitz stated if they had the right person in Sylva, like they had in Cashiers, to operate and organize they would not have the problem.

Mr. Adams stated they did need to duplicate the front end of Cashiers in Sylva. They would need to train people with that skill set to be able to take in multiple applications. Wherever it was setup, they would need to do that. There were two issues, one was a space issue and the other was the front office issue. If they were talking about consolidating the permitting process, they would have to reorganize the front, whether it be at the Justice Center or the Health Department.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(5) CIRCLES OF HOPE: Present for discussions: Ron Robinson, Circles of Hope Coordinator; Kayla Loftis, Circle Leader; Mary Slagle, Circles of Hope Programmer; Patsy Davis, Mountain Projects Executive Director; and Sheri Turk, Occupational Education Program Coordinator & Early Childhood Instructor, SCC.

(a) The mission of Circles was to collaborate with public service and non-profit agencies in order to help people help themselves out of poverty and move the county from Tier 1 to Tier 2. Their goal was to assist 10% of their friends, family and neighbors below the poverty line become self-sustaining.

The program provided weekly training and support to clients referred to as Circle Leaders. The Circle Leaders were mentors/coaches referred to as Allies. They met weekly at First Baptist Church for food, child care and fellowship followed with programs to strengthen financial and personal skills required to acquire a living wage job.

(b) The program was expanding. They were currently serving 15 families and intended to serve as many as 30-40 families by the end of 2017. They could not continue to serve clients with a part-time coordinator and 30 volunteers. A full time coordinator would be required to manage an expanding program and become a stronger partner with others in the community. In addition, a part-time or a full-time case manager would be required to assist families to find needed resources and overcome barriers to move out of poverty.

(c) Needs that they address include the skills needed to manage personal finances and get lives and families in order. They were the only agency in the county that provided long-term (1-3 years) support to families, provide the chance for having more friends (social capital), find job opportunities and education and develop saving habits. Their allies provided goal setting and barrier busting support needed by the Circle Leaders. In addition, their Big View Team was working with landlords to overcome barriers to achieving affordable housing.

(d) Circles was unique in services being provided to those in poverty. Other programs were designed to address immediate crisis and needs. They coordinated with those agencies to provide long-term support for their clients. They partnered with agencies such as HUD, GED, Public Health, Blue Ridge Health, DSS, Neighbors in Need, Head Start, Christian Ministries and Meridian. Their purpose was to help those agencies accomplish their goals through service coordination and long-term support of mutual clients.

(e) Funding sources included monthly and annual donations from community members and Circles of Hope volunteers. More than seven churches provide meals for the weekly meetings at no charge. Grants include the county, Community Foundation, Hennessee Foundation, Blue Ridge Health Foundation and Sylva Rotary.

(f) Individuals served by the agency:

- 2014-15: 5
- 2015-16: 11
- 2016-17: 25 (estimated for full year)
- 2017-18: 35 (projected)

(g) County funds could create jobs with their agency. As the projections indicated, they would need to expand from one part-time coordinator to a full-time coordinator and a part-time case manager. Other sources were uncertain at that time.

(h) Amount of budgeted salaries and benefits for next year:

- \$35,000 Coordinator Salary
- \$15,000 Case Manager Salary
- \$14,000 Coordinator Benefits

They requested \$20,000 from the county to match with other funds needed to have a full-time Case Manager to coordinate resources.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(6) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TDA) REQUEST: Nick Breedlove, Executive Director and Robert Jumper, Chairman, stated that at the August 16th regular board meeting, the TDA unanimously agreed to recommend to Commissioners, for their consideration, a reduction in their board size from 15 to 9 members. A board of nine voting members would be far more operationally-efficient moving forward. The board makeup would remain unchanged, with sixty-six percent of the board comprised of lodging and accommodations and the remainder from the retail and tourism sector.

Magellan Strategy Group's Chris Cavanaugh conducted a study throughout the state and among 31 TDA's from the mountains and elsewhere, their board was the largest. The average board size for TDA's among those surveyed was 8.2 members.

With one vacancy, five board members rotating off that year and one board member that would be stepping down in December, it would be the ideal time for this reduction. With those changes, they would have nine members on the board without removing any sitting board members.

They also suggested:

- Changing the group classifications to 'hotel/resorts/inns' and '10+ rooms' for the accommodations partners on the board.
- A change in the quorum from a fixed number of eight, originally contained in the local resolution, to a majority.
- Extending two terms to expire on December 2020 to allow for three board members to rotate off per year for the next three years. This change would prevent a majority of the board from rotating off and ensures continuity of board operations and organizational knowledge. They were in the process of checking with board members to ensure they would agree to the extension of their terms by a year.
- To ensure future appointments remain staggered, they would like the County Attorney to look at revising the 'Terms of Appointment' section of the bylaws.

All of the recommendations had been vetted by the County Attorney and found to be compliant with the enabling state legislation. While there were a number of changes to consider, they placed them together so as to not have to revisit board structure in the near future.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(7) SYLVA POOL: Present for discussions: Rusty Ellis, Parks and Recreation Director; Michael Hopkins, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director; Victor Lofquist, Engineer/President, Lofquist and Associates; and Daniel Manring, Project Manager, Lofquist and Associates.

Mr. Ellis stated that work had been completed at the Sylva pool in June with re-plastering the pool and they did a great job. Today, they would hear an update from Lofquist and Associates on the Preliminary Engineer Reports for both the Cashiers and Sylva pools.

Mr. Lofquist presented The Sylva Pool:

(a) Authorization and Purpose: The county commissioned a report to complete a preliminary evaluation of the existing Sylva Community Swimming Pool. The pool facility was owned by the Town of Sylva and was operated and maintained by the County Parks and Recreation Department. The report was intended to provide a subjective overview of the swimming facility, including known issues and general condition of the existing swimming pool and provide preliminary recommendations for maintaining and improving the facility.

(b) Prior Work: The Sylva Municipal Swimming Pool and associated bathhouse was originally constructed in 1969. A major renovation of the swimming facility was undertaken in 2000 and the facility had been used for the past 17 seasons since that major renovation. Another renovation took place in the spring of 2017.

(c) Regulations: They went through the North Carolina Public Swimming Pool Regulations and took each design and installation criteria that applied to the pool to see if it was in compliance. The pool was in compliance.

(d) Summary of Preliminary Improvement Recommendations and Preliminary Estimates of Related Costs:

Type of Issue	Description	Recommended Phase (priority)	Estimated Capital Cost
Site related	Master backflow preventer enclosure	3	\$9,500
Site related	Water service line	1	\$1,500
Pool shell related	Fasteners - ladders, rails, gutter grating, etc.	1	\$500
Pool shell related	Underwater lighting	2	\$5,500
Deck related	Concrete repair	1	\$2,800
Deck related	Deck joints	1	\$3,200
Deck related	Signage	1	\$1,850
Equipment/buildings	Fiberglass buildings - repair leaky and damaged roofs and related	1	\$45,000
Equipment/buildings	Fiberglass buildings accessories and hardware	1	\$7,600
Equipment/buildings	Dehumidification	1	\$2,000
Equipment/buildings	Add chemical storage building	3	\$23,000
Bathhouse	Changing rooms and associated bathroom floor improvements	5	Option 1 \$0 Option 2 \$15,500 Option 3 \$24,500 Option 4 \$47,000
Bathhouse	Bathroom partition renovation	1	\$31,000
Bathhouse	Painting	3	\$26,400
Filters	Filters	1	\$5,000
Electrical	Cover main pool electrical panels	1	\$1,500
Optional	Solar pool heating	3	\$16,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST			\$166,350 to \$229,350

(e) Estimated Equivalent Annual Cost of Repairs and Equipment Replacement of Main Pool and Wading Pool: \$38,298. This amount did not include the normal annual budget for power, chemicals or labor, etc.

Commissioner Deitz stated he felt strongly that the bathhouse needed to be fixed and more drains needed to be placed in the floors or a solution to eliminate water standing on the floors.

Mr. Lofquist stated they provided four options for this issue:

- Intensify staff's concentration on keeping floors water free.
- Add four floor drains and leave changing areas as bare concrete floors.
- Add four floor drains and re-paint changing area floors with non-slip epoxy.
- Add four floor drains and tile changing area floors with non-glazed floor tile.

Mr. Adams stated that this topic had been coming back up and he inquired if the bathhouse was a priority and could the remodel be accomplished before next season.

Mr. Lofquist stated the process would need to be started fairly quickly and it would depend on what option they wanted to proceed forward with.

Commissioner Luker inquired if this was a cost-share with the Town of Sylva.

Mr. Adams stated that the intention would be to have cost-sharing with the town. He encouraged the Board and the town to look at the priority list and come back fairly quickly with a plan of action.

Mr. Lofquist recommended taking a stepped approach to the issue and go with the tile option. He thought the most critical item at that point, with the entire facility, was the fiberglass buildings that needed to be addressed. He thought they could have the remodel done if it was not too extensive.

Mr. Adams stated that the county and town could take a few days to consume the information in the pool report, then in the next few days, Mr. Ellis could meet with town staff regarding prioritization and potentially within a month, start coming up with an idea of which elements they wanted to try and attempt. Mr. Ellis could come back in a month and update the Board with a status of a timeline and elements prioritized.

Informational item.

(8) CASHIERS POOL: Mr. Lofquist presented: The Cashiers Pool:

(a) Authorization and Purpose: The County commissioned a report to complete a preliminary evaluation of the existing Cashiers Community Swimming Pool. The pool facility was owned by the Cashiers Valley Community Council and was operated and maintained by the County Parks and Recreation Department. The report was intended to provide a subjective overview of the swimming facility, including known issues and general condition of the existing swimming pool and provide preliminary recommendations for maintaining and improving the facility.

(b) Prior Work: The Cashiers Community Swimming Pool was originally constructed by the Cashiers Valley Community Council in 1982. The pool shell interior was repainted approximately two years ago. Additionally, renovation work was performed on the pool in the spring of 2017.

(c) Regulations: They went through the North Carolina Public Swimming Pool Regulations and took each design and installation criteria that applied to the pool to see if it was in compliance. A pool that was built prior to 1993 did not have to be brought up to regulations until a major remodel was done on the pool.

(d) Summary of Preliminary Improvement Recommendations and Preliminary Estimates of Related Costs:

Type of Issue	Item	Recommended Phase (priority)	Estimated Capital Cost
Site related	Storm drain relocation and building repairs	1	\$66,500
Site related	Water service backflow protection	1	\$3,700
Pool shell related	Replace tile	2	\$7,700
Pool shell related	Remove diving board and patch up deck	1	\$500
Pool shell related	Add well points	3	\$12,500
Pool shell related	Add skimmers and return inlets	3	\$11,800
Pool shell related	Bond/Ground	3	\$8,300
Pool shell related	Replace ladders	2	\$12,600
Deck and related	Replace and expand deck	3	\$113,400
Deck and related	Replace site fencing	3	\$15,500
Circulation system etc.	Upgrade and replace entire circulation and filtration system	3	\$156,000
Circulation system etc.	Dehumidification	1	\$1,000
Circulation system etc.	New chemical storage building	2	\$23,000
Bathhouse	Bathroom water closet and laboratory relocations and partition replacement	2	\$44,000
Bathhouse	Changing room floor improvements	2	Option 1 \$0 Option 2 \$9,500 Option 3 \$18,500 Option 4 \$42,000
Optional	Add gutters	1	\$4,500
Optional	Solar pool heating	3	\$16,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST			\$481,000 to \$539,000

(e) Estimated Equivalent Annual Cost of Repairs and Equipment Replacement of Main Pool and Wading Pool: \$16,923. This amount did not include the normal annual budget for power, chemicals or labor, etc.

Commissioner Luker inquired if there was an agreement with Cashiers Valley Council.

Mr. Hopkins stated there was not an agreement or contract with the Cashiers Valley Council.

Mr. Adams stated that this would be potentially be a more complicated conversation than the Sylva Pool. There was an option to take the pool out and redo it. At some point, it was a better value to do that.

Commissioner Luker stated that was not a decision for the Board as they were talking about something they do not even have an agreement on.

Mr. Adams stated a lot of the conversation needed to be around immediate needs and obviously what type of long-term agreement they would have. He thought prioritizing long-term and how to get through next season would be his priority.

Mr. Ellis stated that he agreed and stated they would need to sit down Cashiers Community Council to discuss what, if anything, they could bring to the table.

Mr. Hopkins stated they would need to address a few minor repairs, but barring any unforeseen issues that may occur between then and next May, the pool would pass inspection and be able to operate for the next season.

Informational item.

(9) DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GRANTS: Mr. Adams stated he received a letter from the NC Rural Economic Development Division. The county had been awarded \$35,000 for downtown revitalization. The county qualified for the grant under Downtown Revitalization: Local governments identified in NC Session Law 2017-257 Section 15.8

Applications received:

(a) Paige Dowling, Sylva Town Manager, presented two applications seeking grant funds for:

- A mural if this downtown revitalization grant was awarded. The mural would be painted on the East side of 548 Mill Street (Ward's Plumbing and Heating) so it would be visible to the 6,436 cars travelling West on Mill Street each day. The content of the mural had not yet been determined, but it would be a scene that would serve as an advertisement for the community. The estimated cost was \$10,000.
- Implementing streetscape improvements on Mill Street in downtown Sylva. The town hoped to utilize grant funding to install bump outs with curbs and brick pavers to replace the white city posts currently on Mill Street. The existing posts had been installed to keep traffic in the right-hand lane; but bump outs would achieve the same purpose and add to the overall streetscape. These bump outs would help to control traffic, improve public infrastructure by adding to the sidewalk and be an aesthetic improvement. Bump outs with curbs would be installed at three locations along Mill Street: East of 551 Mill Street (behind Jackson's General Store), along the crosswalk at 605 Mill Street (Melissa's Backstreet Takeout) and along the side of 635 Mill Street (Dixie & Co. Vintage Market). The estimated cost of all three brick paved bump outs totals \$16,000.

(b) Debbie Coffey, Town of Dillsboro Clerk, presented two applications seeking grant funds for:

- Wayfinding signs to direct visitors to off-street parking, encouraging people to park and walk through the downtown area in Dillsboro. The estimated cost was \$995.00.
- Upgrading the existing gravel path and entrances to the Monteith Farmstead Park and Dillsboro Launch Park to asphalt. This would create a smoother, safer surface for walking and eliminate muddy conditions following rain. In addition, by paving the gravel walkways, it would reduce the maintenance and repair costs. The estimated cost was \$4,207.00.

(c) Michael Poston, Planning Director, presented as Sidewalk Plan for Cashiers. The request would be for a portion of the Plan to be done at approximately \$30 per linear foot. They would be able to submit a request for the section in front of the Library for the remaining balance of the total funds available.

Consensus: *Mr. Adams to submit all of the applications presented.*

(10) **PERSONNEL POLICY:** Danielle Wittekind, Human Resource Director, stated she was available at that time to address any questions or concerns the Board may have regarding the proposed amendments to the Personnel Policy that she presented to them at a work session last month after they had time to read and review the information.

Also, she was currently drafting a grievance procedure, which she would present a completed draft version to the Board at an upcoming meeting. The goal was to have the policy adopted before the end of the calendar year to be effective January 1, 2018.

No one had any questions or issues at that time.

Informational item.

(11) **CLOSED SESSION:** *Carry over.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Elders moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman