

**MINUTES OF A PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
OCTOBER 30, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing on October 30, 2017, at 8:30 a.m., Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 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 public hearing to order and stated the purpose was to provide an explanation and description of the 2018 North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Community Development Block – Infrastructure Grant (CDBG-I) and to receive public input for consideration of the proposed Infrastructure Grant.

Michael Poston, Jackson County Planning Director, was present to discuss the purpose of the public hearing for the County of Jackson’s CDBG-I School funding application. Mr. Poston stated that the purpose of the public hearing was to obtain citizen’s views and to respond to funding proposals and answer any questions posed by citizens. Mr. Poston also stated that the public hearing must cover the County’s community development needs, development of the proposed activities and a review of program compliance before the submission of the County’s CDBG-I funding application to the state of the North Carolina.

The County proposes requesting funding from NCDEQ’S CDBG-I program for the Blue Ridge School Water System. The purpose of the CDBG-I grant program is: To improve the quality of life for low to moderate income people by providing a safe, clean environment and clean drinking water through water and sewer infrastructure improvements and extensions of service.

- To benefit a residential area where at least 51% of the beneficiaries were low to moderate income as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- To perform eligible activities.
- To minimize displacement, and
- Provide displacement assistance as necessary.

For the fiscal year of 2017 the CDBG-I School funding available is expected to be \$ 4.5 million dollars and the maximum available grant is up to \$1.0 million. Applications for funding were received November 1, 2017 and it is a one-time funding cycle.

The CDBG program was able to fund a wide variety of community development activities. The State of North Carolina has chosen to fund two activities: water and sewer infrastructure and economic development projects that lead to job creation or retention. The infrastructure program or CDBG-I program had found a range of water and sewer infrastructure and economic development activities, including, but not limited to the, following:

Water:

- Projects that resolve water loss in distribution systems.
- Projects that extend public water to areas with contaminated wells.
- Projects that extend water lines to areas with dry wells.
- Projects that assist with low water pressure in public water systems.

- Projects that regionalize two or more water systems.
- Project that rehabilitate or replace a water treatment plant.

Wastewater:

- Projects that resolve inflow and infiltration to collection systems and surcharges from pumps stations and manholes.
- Projects that extend public sewer to areas with failed septic tanks.
- Projects that rehabilitate a wastewater treatment plant to allow for greater efficiency/ compliance with regulations.

The County is seeking an amount in CDBG-I School funds not to exceed \$284,270 for the Blue Ridge School Water System. The purpose of the County's request is to replace the elevated tank with ground level storage and booster pumping at the Blue Ridge School. The new system will include ground level gravity storage tanks, booster pumping and the dismantlement and removal of the existing elevated tank. Also included is an automatic standby generator to operate the booster pumping system during power outages. The new system will use booster pumping in lieu of the elevated tank to maintain service pressures at the school connection during peak demand conditions. The instantaneous peak demand for 450 students will be met. This storage system will be more accessible for monitoring, operating and maintaining in comparison to an elevated tank. This entire project is to replace the aging elevated storage tank that does not meet current standards, has a deteriorating foundation, is in need of metal repairs, does not have an adequate heating system to prevent freezing conditions and has interior and exterior coating systems that have exceeded their life spans and were no longer protecting against corrosion. The existing elevated tank was installed 43 years ago (1974) by Brown Steel Inc.

The project proposed by the County of Jackson is identified in Jackson County School Board 5-year Capital Improvement Plan 2017. While there were no informal community meetings, the staff of the Blue Ridge School was actively involved with informing parents about the project during the income survey process. The Board of Commissioners also discussed this project at several work session meetings and the local newspapers covered the story prior to the public hearing.

A total of 100% of the CDBG- I funding will be used to benefit Low to Moderate Income (LMI) people. The project area in the County of Jackson had been determined to have a Low to Moderate Income level of 70%. The project area included Blue Ridge School, located at 95 Bobcat Drive, Cashiers NC 28717.

The range of activities covered by the CDBG-I funds for the Blue Ridge School Water System includes:

- Construction.
- Engineering Design
- Construction Administration and observation.
- Legal activities.
- Surveying.

If the County of Jackson is awarded a CDBG-I grant, the county is required to adhere to federal procurement requirements and other federal regulations which includes:

- American with Disabilities Act/Section 504 Survey.
- Davis-Bacon & Related Labor Acts.
- Adoption/Submittal of a Citizen's Participation Plan.
- Adoption/Submittal of an Equal Opportunity Plan.
- Adoption/Submittal of a Fair Housing Plan.
- Adoption/Submittal of a Language Access Plan.
- Adoption/Submittal of a Relocation Assistance Plan.
- Adoption/Submittal of a Section 3 Plan.
- Excess Force Provision.

The State of North Carolina required that the if the County of Jackson received CDBG grant funding that the county would certify that they will comply with the requirements of the general displacement and relocation policy for CDBG grant funding. This policy assists low to moderate income people with costs associated with relocation or displacement, should such relocation become necessary due to the project activities. CDBG funds can be used for those costs, if necessary. There was no displacement and relocation as a result of the proposed CDBG grant activity.

In the past, the County applied for and received for the following completed CDBG project:

- CDBG 10-C- 2232 Reach Village 10 unit rental project acquisition \$ 600,000.
- CDBG 10-C-2144 Home Rehabilitation 8 units \$500,000.
- CDBG 11-C-2267 NC Tomorrow Preparation of a 5 year Regional Economic Development Plan \$ 50,000.
- CDBG 12-C-2421 Scattered Site Housing Rehabilitation 6 units \$ 225,000.

The County will submit the CDBG-I School program application for the Blue Ridge School Water System project on November 1, 2017. The CDBG-I School program application would be available for review during normal business hours at 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Suite A-207, Sylva, NC 28779. Additional information is available from the Jackson County Manager located at 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Suite A-207, Sylva, NC 28779.

Should there be any complaints or grievances regarding the subject public hearing, they should be addressed to the addressee mentioned above within 10 business days or by November 13, 2017 and a written response to the written complaints and/or grievances would be sent by the County within 10 business days, where practicable.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

(a) Dr. Kim Elliott, Interim Superintendent for Jackson County Public Schools, stated that on behalf of the Jackson County Board of Education and herself, she wanted to thank the Board for the opportunity to seek funding through the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant through the Title I Housing and Community Development Act).

A special thank you to: Darlene Fox, Don Adams, Julie Cubeta, Rhonda Hooper, Darin Allison, Gwen Edwards, Jason Watson, and our principals, Teri Walawender and Brent Speckhardt. The survey return rate revealed a 70% low to moderate-income level for those families and individuals returning surveys. Blue Ridge School certainly deserved a water storage system to replace the current tower. The water tower was the structural issue. Consequently, while the water quality was excellent at that time, the tower structure at Blue Ridge was not.

The funding for this project, estimated at \$284,760 was critical to Blue Ridge School's students and staff.

She was appreciative for the work thus far, fully supported the elimination of the current tower, and was hopeful that this project could be completed for Blue Ridge PK-13 students.

(b) Gwen Edwards, Finance Officer, stated she wanted to acknowledge all of the hard work of the parents and staff to get the forms in.

(c) Ken Henke, School Board Chairman, stated is was in support of this project and was there to help and support the kids.

There being no public comments, Commissioner Deitz moved that the public hearing be adjourned. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman