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Time Posted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Posted By: Pat Parris  
Witnessed By: \_\_\_\_\_

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
FEBRUARY 20, 2012**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on February 20, 2012, 6:00 pm, Justice & Administration Bldg, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman  
Doug Cody, Vice Chair  
Charles Elders, Commissioner  
Mark Jones, Commissioner  
Joe Cowan, Commissioner

Chuck Wooten, County Manager  
J. K. Coward, Jr., Co. Attorney  
Pat Parris, Clerk to Board

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

**AGENDA:** Chairman Debnam amended the Agenda by adding REACH Update. Commissioner Elders moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**MINUTES:** Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Minutes of the Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of February 6, 2012. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**(1) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:** Mr. Wooten reported:

**(a) Neighbors in Need:** Charlie McConnell, Chairman of Neighbors in Need has provided a report of activities and support being provided to County residents.

**(b) REACH – Jackson County:** REACH ceased operations on February 9<sup>th</sup>. He is working with Bob Cochran and Chip Hall to develop a short-term strategy for providing domestic violence services in Jackson County. Last Friday, Mr. Cochran assembled a group from across the region and the outcome from this meeting resulted in the Macon County REACH organization stepping up and offering to provide services to Jackson County until a long term solution can be identified. A number of agencies have contacted Mr. Cochran and offered assistance including a couple of State agencies who have current grant agreements with Jackson REACH. The IRS tax lien will be paid from the proceeds at the closing of the sale of the REACH apartments to Mountain Projects.

**(c) Tuckasegee Water and Sewer Authority:** TWSA has requested the County to provide suggestions or recommendations for water and sewer projects that should be considered by TWSA for inclusion in its five year growth plan. The information needs to be submitted by March 16<sup>th</sup>.

**(d) Consolidation of Code Enforcement and Building Inspections:** The evaluation process has begun for combining operations and Tony Elders has been given the responsibility to facilitate the process for determining how best these departments can be consolidated. Builders and developers will be contacted to ascertain how the County permitting process can be more effective and to inquire about their experiences at other permitting agencies.

**(e) Veterans Services:** Plans are being finalized to relocate the Veterans Office to the Senior Center by the middle of March. The Veterans Office will utilize three offices off the main lobby heretofore used by outside agencies on a sporadic basis. This space will provide a private office for the service officer and the clerical support person as well as a secure office for files and records.

**(f) HUD Housing:** Mountain Projects continues to administer the housing program for Jackson County until the program is officially transferred. Based on recent correspondence from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the transfer will take place effective July 1, 2012.

**(g) Fire Marshal:** He met with the fire chiefs from each volunteer fire department to gather input about expectations and support they need from this position. In conducting exit interviews with Alan Farmer and reviewing the current job description, the expectation for one person to provide all fire inspections is not practical or probable; consequently, effective February 14<sup>th</sup> the responsibility for fire inspections was transferred to building inspections

With the removal of the Fire Marshal Dept., he recommended that the position be reconstructed to report to the Emergency Management Dept. with primary duties of supporting fire investigations and coordination with the fire departments. In addition, the position would assist the Emergency Management Director with the planning, organization, assessment, and implementation of emergency management activities. The position would be re-titled "Emergency Management Specialist/Deputy Fire Marshal" and the pay grade would be lowered from a grade 24 to a grade 20 with a minimum salary of \$31,238.53. The Emergency Management Director would also carry the title of Fire Marshal. Mr. Farmer's last day will be February 29<sup>th</sup>; consequently, this position will be vacant for a short period of time during recruitment and interviews.

**(h) Economic Development Activities:** Interviews will be conducted with a number of leaders across the county to gather information about their concerns and/or suggestions for improving economic development activities in the County. A joint meeting with the Boards of the Municipalities and County to discuss the project and to review the current status of the EDC is recommended. The date for this dinner meeting is Monday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm in the Heritage Dining Room of the Senior Center.

**(i) Update on Capital Projects:**

- **Smoky Mountain High School** – the design development stage is completed and work will begin on construction drawings. Contracts for surveying, geotechnical evaluation, and water flow testing have been issued.
- **Cashiers Recreation Site Work** – the sewer line has been certified and the homeowner with the failing septic system has been notified that they can hook to the system. The concession stand restrooms and other County properties can be connected to the system.
- **Cashiers Recreation Center** – work is progressing ahead of schedule. Most of the exterior walls are in place, rough plumbing and electrical is underway, and the pouring of floor slabs has begun. The construction site camera linked to the WEB site is being relocated to the library building to provide a better view of the project as it moves forward.
- **Mark Watson Park** – the final tasks are being finalized and the project can be completed once there are a few days of dry weather.

**(j) Upcoming Events:**

- Joint meeting with Municipalities, March 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at the Senior Center.
- NCACC Regional meeting – April 11<sup>th</sup> in Asheville.
- Activities associated with the installation of David Belcher, WCU Chancellor, are scheduled during the week of March 25<sup>th</sup> including a reception in the courtroom of the old courthouse on Monday evening, March 25<sup>th</sup> that will feature readings by Sue Ellen Bridgers, Jerry Wolfe, and Ron Rash.
- Tenth Annual Voluntary Emergency Services Awards Dinner on February 21, 7:00 pm in the “Heritage Room:” at the Senior Center.

**(2) CONSENT AGENDA:** Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented Finance and Tax Collector reports for January 2012, including the Cashiers TTA and Jackson TTA, and nine budget amendments. The Tax Collector’s report reflects over payment refunds in the amount of \$16,658.18 plus additional refunds of \$1,721.70 for a total of \$18,379.88.

***Motion:** Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Consent Agenda.  
Commissioner Cody seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(3) DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS VEHICLES:** Darlene Fox, Finance Director, requested that the following vehicles be declared surplus and authorized for sale:

- 1996 Dodge Van
- Two 1997 Dodge Vans
- 1991 Chevrolet Truck
- 1989 Chevrolet Truck
- 1999 Dodge Truck transfer to Board of Education for the sum of \$500.00

***Motion:** Commissioner Jones moved to declare the six vehicles surplus and posted for sale on Public Surplus with the exception of the 1999 Dodge Truck which will be transferred to the Board of Education for the sum of \$500.00.  
Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(4) REACH:** Ann VanHarlingen, REACH of Macon County Director, stated that plans are underway to open an office in Jackson County by March 1<sup>st</sup> with three staff members.

**(5) COMMUNITY GARDEN:** Adam Bigelow stated he was interested in starting a Jackson County Garden Project which would serve as a centralized location for a community-style garden and provide a place for a Youth Farmstead. The five plus acre tract is located at the corner of South Painter Road and Monteith Gap Road which is owned by the County for use as a greenway and is ideal for a shared- use facility.

**(6) WI-FI TOWER:** George Ware of The Chalet Inn in Whittier stated that high speed internet is important to area businesses. Even though his business is located along a DSL line, it does not have the bandwidth to support his expansion. He recommended that the County and Town of Sylva set a deadline for the sale of Metrostat’s assets and in the interim, the County and Town reactivate Metrostat’s tower until another company has replaced the service.

**(7) COUNTY FLAG COMMITTEE:** Mr. Wooten suggested that a Flag Committee made up of various members of the community be appointed and spear headed by a Commissioner. He recommended David Hopkins, who requested that a flag be approved, be one of the appointees. The committee will solicit proposals and make a selection which will be presented to the Board for consideration. Commissioner Cowan volunteered to serve and requested that all Commissioners make recommendations at the next meeting.

**(8) DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT:** Gerald Green, Planning Director, requested that a public hearing be scheduled for the Carlton Land Trust, Chinquapin Development. Chairman Debnam scheduled a public hearing on March 5, 2012 at 1:45 p.m.

**(9) FOOD SERVICE CONTRACT MODIFICATIONS:** Commissioners Cody and Jones and Mr. Wooten were appointed by the Board to meet with John Faulk to discuss possible modifications to the current five year contract that began in July 2010 and continues through June 2015. A meeting was held on January 26<sup>th</sup> and a follow up meeting was held on February 9<sup>th</sup>. The following are proposed contract modifications;

(a) Effective March 1, 2012, the County guarantees 150 meals per day seven days a week for the Detention Center, 120 meals 3 days per week and 150 meals two days per week for a total of 660 meals per week for the Senior Center. On the first business day of each month, funds will be advanced to the contractor for the total guaranteed meals of the Detention Center at the current approved price per meal. If the actual count of meals exceeds the guaranteed meals, then the additional meals will be included on the next month's invoice. In reference to Senior Center meals, the contractor will submit periodic invoices for meals served to seniors since funding restrictions prohibit the payment of meals in advance of them being served.

(b) In the event of adverse weather, the Senior Center will notify the food contractor by 7:00 a.m. if meals are cancelled for the current day and the contractor will have no claim for meals that day.

(c) Effective March 1, 2012, the cost per meal will be increased from \$4.20 per meal to \$4.75 per meal.

(d) The Food Contractor will be responsible for all utilities associated with the operation of the kitchen at the Senior Center. The Food Contractor agrees to serve only groups who cannot be accommodated by other area restaurants and in return will not be charged future rent scheduled to begin on July 1, 2012. The Food Contractor will continue as the preferred caterer for events held in the Senior Center. Access to kitchen for catered events is limited only to the Food Contractor who has responsibility for maintaining food sanitation certification.

(e) The Senior Center and Detention Center will be invoiced at cost for all requested supplies that are not part of the normal food service. Examples of these supplies include Styrofoam trays, individual packs of salt, pepper, ketchup, mustard, bulk napkins, etc. A list of supplies will be developed and agreed to by all parties. The Senior Center and Detention Center may purchase these items direct from a vendor if so desired.

(f) The start-up funds provided to the contractor at the beginning of the contract as well as subsequent advances will be amortized over the life of the contract.

(g) The Food Contractor will not be entitled to any additional management fee. Meal prices are determined by mutual consent between the County and Food Contractor and may be adjusted annually in accordance with the National Restaurant Wholesale Food Price Index. The actual WEB address of this index will be incorporated into the contract and will serve as a basis for future increase requests. Either party may terminate agreement without cause by providing notice of said termination in writing ninety (90) days prior to the termination date.

All other aspects of the current contract remain in place and the County Attorney will modify the contract to incorporate approved adjustments.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Cody moved to approve the modifications. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(10) OCCUPANCY TAX STUDY COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Jones reported that a meeting of the Occupancy Tax Steering Committee is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2012, 1:00 p.m. at the Hooper House (Chamber of Commerce) in Sylva. The seven volunteers are Mark Jones, Jack Debnam, Clifford Meads, Merrily Teasley, Vic Patel, Robert Jumper and Julie Spiro.

**(11) PLANNING BOARD:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Ed Weatherby and Wayne Cobb to 3- year terms on the Planning Board. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(12) HEALTH BOARD:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Cody moved to reappoint Kim Cowan to a 3- term on the Health Board. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(13) CASHIERS TRAVEL & TOURISM AUTHORITY:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Jones moved to appoint Vincent Ferri and reappoint Mike Henry to 3- year terms on the Cashiers TTA Board. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(14) JACKSON TRAVEL & TOURISM AUTHORITY:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Elders moved to appoint Doug Cody and reappoint Mickey Luker and Alex Bell to 3-year terms on the Jackson TTA Board. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**INFORMAL COMMENTS:**

- (a) Marie Leatherwood of Sylva stated her opinion concerning Board actions.
- (b) Geraldine Collins of Sylva encouraged the Board to continue financial support to REACH.
- (c) David Jacobs of Tuckaseegee stated he supported George Ware's efforts to provide high-speed internet to all areas of Jackson County.
- (d) David Brooks of Whittier stated he is opposed to the 441 Corridor going into Cherokee and presented a petition containing signatures of citizens in that area who oppose the Ordinance. He encouraged the Board to schedule another public hearing so the people can express what they want in their community.

(e) Lucy Christopher of Cashiers stated she supports REACH and urged the Board to continue financial support in the upcoming budget.

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

There being no further business, Chairman Debnam moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

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W. J. Debnam, Chairman