

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
DECEMBER 3, 2012**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on December 3, 2012, 2:00 pm, Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Rd., Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman  
Doug Cody, Vice Chair  
Mark Jones, Commissioner  
Charles Elders, 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 Airport Authority Appointment. Commissioner Jones moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**MINUTES:** Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Minutes of a Work Session, three Public Hearings and Regular Meeting of November 19, 2012. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

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

**(a) Unemployment Rates:** The October unemployment rate for Jackson County increased from 7.7% to 7.9; however, the October 2012 rate is .9% less than the 2011 rate for the same period. With the exception of Haywood County, Jackson's rate is the lowest of the remaining western counties.

**(b) BalsamWest FiberNet Closing:** The scheduled closing for November 28<sup>th</sup> was delayed in order to obtain signatures and approval for a requested form from the owners of the property on which the County has a ground lease for the antenna and Mr. Coward is working to obtain a new signed form. Hopefully, the closing will take place before the end of the year.

**(c) Cashiers/Glenville Recreation Center:** A temporary certificate of occupancy has been obtained and the final punch list items are being completed. County maintenance staff will receive training next week from the general contractor and the appropriate subs on the various controls and systems in the building. Equipment is scheduled for delivery and installation during the week of December 3<sup>rd</sup>. In addition, the final paperwork on the Cashiers Recreation Site work has been received by the engineer and steps are being taken to officially close this project. The notice to proceed was issued to the general contractor for the sidewalk project.

**(d) Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountain High Schools Projects:** The first monthly construction meeting was held on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Both projects are underway with contractor mobilization and significant foundation and excavation work should be seen during the month of December. The next scheduled construction meeting is December 18<sup>th</sup>.

**(e) Welcome Signs:** Over the past year the Board has talked about improving the signage at entrances to Jackson County. He has worked with NCDOT on the appropriate size and design and the signs have been manufactured and are being installed. County maintenance staff has installed most of the smaller signs and he has contracted with NCDOT for the installation of the larger signs. All signs should be in place by the end of the year.

**(f) Department of Aging Project Care Grant:** The Department of Aging has been notified that it will receive a \$15,000 grant from the Community Foundation in support of the Project Care Program. The funds will be used to purchase a tool trailer, wood splitter, and other construction tools that will be utilized in building ramps and providing firewood for seniors.

**(g) NCACC Legislative Goals Conference:** The annual conference will be held in Raleigh on January 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> to adopt the legislative agenda of the County Commissioners Association for the 2013 legislative session that begins on January 29<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioners will need to appoint a voting delegate and heretofore the Chairman has been the delegate for the Commissioners.

**(i) Employee Recognition and Holiday Luncheon:** The event is scheduled on Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at the Heritage Dining Room in the Senior Center.

**(j) Smoky Mountain Host Annual Meeting:** He attended the annual meeting on November 29<sup>th</sup> and heard some very interesting presentations on outdoor recreation and the impact these activities are having on the local economy especially as it relates to Travel and Tourism. Duke Energy announced a \$75,000 grant to support the efforts of creating a model for the "National Blueway" project, to support Region A in their efforts to publish a map of outdoor recreation opportunities, and to support the marketing efforts of the great rivers and great lakes of the NC Smokies. There is a real sense of excitement about the 2013 World Freestyle Kayak Games that will be held in September 2013 in the Nantahala Gorge. This event will bring a large number of spectators and participants and will have a very positive impact on the region. Hopefully, the TDA will be able to attract some of these guests to Jackson County. Fred Alexander was recognized with their annual achievement award. Fred serves as treasurer of the organization and has been a supporter of SMH since its inception and as most of you know, Fred will be retiring from Duke Energy on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Kim Albritton also updated the group on the future plans for the GSMR and Dillsboro and Andrews are both points of interest for them to expand service into for 2013.

**(k) County Flag Project:** He will be meeting with representatives from Smoky Mountain High School, Southwestern Community College, and Western Carolina University to review the submittals received for a county flag. He anticipates being able to reduce the number to a manageable number that can be submitted to the Commissioners for consideration in early 2013.

**(l) NC Dept of Commerce:** He received a letter stating that Jackson County will change tiers in the coming year from its current Tier 2 to Tier 1. Jackson County has shown a moderate decrease in median household income and an increase in the twelve-month unemployment rate. In addition to negative shifts in two of the four development factors, state law automatically assigns a county as a Tier 1 if it has both a population of less than 50,000 and a poverty rate above 19%. Thus, Jackson County's population of 40,606 in combination with a poverty rate above 19% moves it to a Tier 1 designation for 2012.

**(m) Transfer Station Fire:** There was a fire Friday night at the Transfer Station in which one trailer was destroyed. An investigation continues.

**(2) FONTANA LIBRARY REGIONAL AGREEMENT:** The agreement is a joint Regional Library Agreement between Jackson, Swain, Macon Counties and Fontana Regional Library. Fontana will operate the county libraries and branches and each county will provide facilities, utilities, building and grounds maintenance, improvements or rent. Each county has equal representation on the Fontana Library Board of Trustees. The Agreement is for an initial term of ten years and thereafter automatically renew for successive periods of ten years each, unless otherwise terminated. Mr. Coward stated the statute cited as N.C.G.S.160A-20-1 in three paragraphs of the Agreement should be corrected and cited as N.C.G.S. 160A-460.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Cody moved to approve the Agreement contingent upon correction of the statute number as noted by Mr. Coward. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(3) COUNTY ATTORNEY CONTRACT:** Mr. Coward presented a County Attorney Contract for the period of December 3, 2012 – December 2, 2013 payable at the rate of \$200.00 per hour.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Cody moved to approve the contract. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(4) SCC BUDGET:** Mr. Wooten presented SCC's FY2012-13 budget in the amount of \$27,037,810. The County only has authority over the local appropriation. The other revenues are state appropriations which are made directly to SCC. The SCC Board has approved the budget. Approval by the County is a formality. Darlene Fox, Finance Director, has reviewed the budget and concurs that the local appropriation information is correct.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Elders moved to approve SCC's budget. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(4) MOUNTAINS TO SEAL TRAIL RESOLUTION (R12-36):** Gerald Green, Planning Director, stated an official route for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail between the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and Balsam Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway has never been designated since the trail was first proposed in 1977. He requested that the Board request the NC Division of Parks & Recreation, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Nantahala National Forest to adopt a primary planned route for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail through Jackson and Swain Counties.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Jones moved to adopt the Resolution. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(5) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY APPOINTMENTS:** Pursuant to Section 3 of the Resolution, initial appointments shall be for staggered terms and Section 8 states the Chairperson shall be designated by the Commissioners.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Jones moved to appoint John Woods, Debby Hattler, Merrily Teasley, Cherie Bowers and Alex Bell for one year terms;  
Mary Lanning, Bob Dews, Brian Peterkin, Julie Stockton, Jim Hartbarger, and Russ Seagle for two year terms;  
Clifford Meads, Chairman, Ken Fernandez, Vick Patel, and Mickey Luker for three year terms;  
Vickie Greene (Commissioners Designee), Stephanie Edwards (Executive Director, Cashiers Chamber of Commerce) and Julie Spiro (Executive Director, Jackson Chamber of Commerce) as Ex-Officio members.  
Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by a vote of 4-0 with Commissioner Elders abstaining..

**(6) AIRPORT AUTHORITY APPOINTMENT:**

***Motion:*** Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Mike Schoonover to a 6-year term and appoint Vicki Greene to fill the unexpired term of Joe Cowan on the Airport Authority Board. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(7) TUCKASEIGEE WATER & SEWER BOARD APPOINTMENT:**

***Motion:*** Chairman Debnam moved to appoint Doug Cody for a 3-term on the TWSA Board. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Chairman Debnam presented an appreciation plaque to outgoing board member Joe Cowan commemorating his ten years of service as a Commissioner.

**Informal Comments by Public:** Lucy Christopher, Cashiers, expressed appreciation to Commissioner Joe Cowan for his service on the Board.

**Press Conference**

There being no further business, Chairman Debnam moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2: 35 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

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W. J. Debnam, Chairman

