

**MINUTES OF A  
WORK SESSION  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
MARCH 17, 2014**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on March 17, 2014 at 2:00 p.m, Justice & Administration Building, Room A227, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman                      Chuck Wooten, County Manager  
Doug Cody, Vice Chair                      Pat Parris, Clerk to Board  
Charles Elders, Commissioner                      J. K. Coward, Jr., County Attorney  
Vicki Greene, Commissioner  
Mark Jones, Commissioner - Absent

Chairman Debnam called the Work Session to order.

**(1) GOOD SAMARITAN CLINIC- 2013 UPDATE:** Rebecca Olson (retired), introduced the new Executor Director, Rebecca Mathis. The clinic is an adult, primary care, free clinic. It is a volunteer-based 501C3 non-profit organization and is intended to serve as a “temporary safety net” source of care. The clinic serves persons between the ages of 18-65 who are not eligible for Medicaid, are uninsured, and with household incomes below 175% of federal poverty guidelines (FPG) in Jackson, Swain and other westernmost counties. The clinic is located in the old Sylva Medical Center building. As a primary care clinic, patients are offered patient evaluation, diagnostic testing, diagnosis, and prescriptions. Ms. Mathis presented clinic statistics for 2013 which reflect that during 2013 care was provided to 428 different patients for a total of 2,516 visits. Patients were also referred to specialists, therapists and rehabilitation as needed. Financially, the clinic operates solely from the support of donations, special gifts and grants. The estimated value of the donated care, services, supplies and medications during 2013 was approximately \$3.8 million.

**(2) EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:** Jordan Rink, Manager, Blue Ridge Emergency Preparedness Group, LLC (BREPG), presented a proposal to provide Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning, Training and Exercise assistance to Jackson County. BREPG has significant experience in the development and delivery of similar planning, training and exercise projects. A significant amount of planning and training is conducted annually, and it is necessary to test or exercise these plans and the staff implementing them on a regular basis. Proper documentation of these events is critical in developing material and After Action Reports will be consistent with HSEEP guidelines.

BREPG efforts will meet or exceed all the requirements established as well as any guidelines provided by North Carolina Emergency Management, FEMA/DHS, and Jackson County. BREPG fully understands all of the administrative and operational guidelines, objectives and commitments which will be provided and delivered within the allocated contract period. BREPG will provide the most current emergency management planning practices and highly skilled subject matter experts to this project.

The total cost to coordinate meetings, develop planning, training and exercise documents, staff and conduct the training/exercise is \$7,770.50. These costs include all planning meetings, draft plans, final plans and other training and exercise documentation, and any final revisions or recommendations as provided by the Jackson County Project Manager and COOP Planning Team. A Continuity of Government Plan, a companion plan to the COOP, can be included with this project for an additional \$2,164.00. Todd Dillard, Emergency Mgmt. Director, stated grant funds will cover the costs and no board action is required.

**(3) TRANSIT – VETERANS GRANT:** Kim Angel, Macon County Transit Director, stated that a \$574,000 Veterans grant has been awarded to the Macon County Transit office as the lead agent. Funds will be used to coordinate transit systems in the westernmost counties for all veterans in need of transportation, i.e., medical appointments, schooling, unemployment offices, job interviews, and other types of appointments. In addition, creation of a 1-800 call center, scheduling software and installation of tablets in transit vehicles. Currently four counties are committed: Macon, Clay, Cherokee and Swain. The approximate local matching fund requirement this year from Jackson will be \$21,000. This is a 80/20 grant with fees to be divided among participating counties and includes a 5 year agreement at a cost of approximately \$15,000 per county per year for hosting and data fees. She was unsure if Jackson can delay making a decision until July 1st because contract negotiations are underway and all documentation must be completed by the end of September.

*Consensus: Need additional information at an upcoming meeting.*

**(4) HEALTH DEPT. – MEDICAL RECORDS:** Paula Carden, Director, stated her office has been exploring Electronic Medical Records (EMR) systems that will allow the department to “attest to Meaningful Use”. Meaningful Use Rule I is a part of a coordinated set of regulations to help create a private and secure 21st-Century electronic health information system that improves patient outcomes. Currently a state system, Health Information System (HIS), rolled out in April 2010 has still not met “meaningful use”. The Health Dept. has missed out on several thousands of incentive dollars without being able to “attest”. The HIS system is not, at this time, a true electronic medical records system because the only capabilities the department has is patient and billing or recording of patient encounters. It is not used to record clinical information. The EMR system proposed is Patagonia Health. About 30% of health departments throughout the state have chosen to begin using Patagonia. Patagonia Health is certified by the Drummond Group, an ONC-ATCB (federally Authorized Testing & Certification Body), to certify any completed or modular EMR for both ambulatory and inpatient applications in accordance with the applicable certification criteria adopted by the Secretary of HHS.

She proposes to pay the start-up cost from the Medicaid Cost Settlement revenue this year with the ongoing monthly subscription fees (which at this time are less than the proposed HIS fees) from state dollars such as General Aid to the County. Technology costs are an allowable expenditure from this line item.

**(5) PERSONNEL POLICY:** Danielle Wittekind, Human Resources Director, presented the following proposed revisions to Articles III and IV:

**ARTICLE III:**

**Section 3.** (revise second sentence in first paragraph):

The pay structure shall be externally competitive, maintain proper internal relationships among all positions, based on relative duties and responsibilities, and shall *recognize performance as the basis for pay increases within the established pay range.*

1. Hiring Rate/Starting Salary. All employees will normally be hired at the minimum of their assigned salary grade. *Appointments above the minimum may be made by the County Manager when deemed necessary and in the best interest of the County.....*

Merit increases, ..... *Such merit increases must be recommended by the department head and approved by the County Manager. ....*

#### **Section 6.**

1. ....*If an employee's current salary is already above the new minimum salary rate, his/her salary may be adjusted five percent (5%) upward or left unchanged at the .....*

4. Reclassification (revise entire paragraph)

b. *Labor Market Adjustment – When an employee's position is adjusted to a higher salary range, due to current labor market trends for hiring and retention, the employee's salary will be increased at least five percent (5%) or will be increased to the minimum of the new range established for the classification, whichever is higher.*

c. Delete entire paragraph

#### **Section 9.**

3. ....*Compensatory leave must be taken before annual or sick leave if the employee has more than forty (40) hours of compensatory leave.*

4. *Nonexempt employees who work in public safety activities, emergency response activities, or seasonal activities may accrue not more than 450 hours of compensatory time for overtime hours worked, and will earn overtime in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act rather than as stated in 3 above. All other nonexempt employees may not accrue more than 240 hours of compensatory time for overtime hours worked.*

5. *Compensatory time must be taken before annual or sick leave if the employee has more than forty (40) hours of compensatory time. ....*

#### **Section 12.** (revise entire paragraph)

*Salary adjustments shall become effective on the date of the actual adjustment. In the event that the salary adjustment cannot be administered immediately, when it actually does occur, the pay shall be retroactive to the approved effective date of adjustment.*

**ARTICLE IV:**

**Section 8.**

The Human Resources Director and the department head of the vacant position will screen applications down to a qualified pool of applicants and interview. ....

**Section 9.** (revise entire paragraph)

*An employee appointed to a permanent position shall serve a probationary period of one (1) year. Any employee serving a probationary period following initial appointment may be dismissed at any time during the probationary period. Following successful completion of the probationary period, the employee may be dismissed only as provided in Article VIII.*

**Consensus:** Continue reviewing additional Articles in future work sessions.

**(7) GREENWAY/PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE UPDATE:** Gerald Green, Planning Director, presented the following update:

**Tuckasegee Phase 1:**

- Greenway will start at Locust Creek and continue upstream along the Tuckasegee for approximately 1 mile
- Trailhead with parking at Locust Creek and at Monteith Gap Road
- Phase 1 section consists of 2 elements:

Greenway – paved trail along river

Bridge over the Tuckasegee at Locust Creek

- Partners in the Greenway Project  
Jackson County

Parks and Recreation Trust Fund  
Duke Energy

NCDOT

**Project Budget:**

- Projected Cost - \$1.1 Million
- Sources of project funds :

PARTF grant - \$435,000

NCDOT - \$15,000

County Funds (Greenway and Duke Mitigation Funds) - \$650,000

- Plans are reviewed continually to identify ways to reduce costs

**Project Status:**

- Greenway trail work started last fall :

Final grading completed

Work suspended until this spring

- Coordinate greenway trail with Bridge:

Trail construction will be completed in early summer

- Bridge design near completion:

Design must be approved by NCDOT Raleigh office

Design must also be approved by TWSA

Upon NCDOT and TWSA approval of plans, bridge fabrication will begin

- Bridge installation proposed as separate contract

**(8) SCHOOLS– BUDGET REQUEST FY2014-15:** Dr. Mike Murray, Superintendent, and Gwen Edwards, Finance Officer, presented the following:

**Potential Local Fund Use:**

- Proposed reinstatement of 3% salary supplement for all licensed staff
- Proposed one time 2% salary supplement for all non-licensed staff
- \$1,000 recruitment and retention signing bonus for licensed staff new to JCPS
- No cuts in teacher assistant positions or hours

**Capital Outlay:**

- Various Projects -           \$ 235,000

- Technology - \$ 397,500
- One to One Computing - \$ 283,500
- \$ 916,000

**Operations:**

- Request no change in county appropriation of \$6,779,482 for the 2014-15 school year
- Request one additional elementary resource officer
- Request authorization to ask for financial assistance with emergency repairs that exceed \$20,000

**Total Request:** Approximately \$7,695,482.

**Consensus:** Review request during budget meetings.

Agenda items not discussed will be added to the next Work Session Agenda.

There being no further comments, Commissioner Greene moved that the Work Session be adjourned. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Attested By:

Approved:

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Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

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W. J. Debnam, Chairman