

Posted: May 21, 2003
Time Posted: _____
Posted By: Evelyn Baker
Witnessed By: _____

**MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
May 20, 2003**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Tuesday, May 20, 2003, at 5:00 p.m. in Room 203, Justice & Administration Building, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Stacy Buchanan, Chairman
Roberta Crawford, Vice Chairman
Joe Cowan, Commissioner
Brian McMahan, Commissioner
Eddie Madden, Commissioner
Kenneth L. Westmoreland, County Manager
Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to the Board

Chairman Buchanan called the hearing to order and stated the purpose was to discuss the FY2003-2004 Proposed Budget.

(1) GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE – Benefits Committee Report :

Commissioner McMahan reported that the committee had met with Mark III Brokerage 3 or 4 times. Mark III compared the current health care program with other counties and recommended that the county remain with the current provider for health insurance coverage. Mr. Westmoreland stated that JSL recommended a rate adjustment of 7%. The lack of medical care competition does affect the rate. After researching other plans on health, dental, short-term disability, and life insurance, the county achieved an overall decrease in rates. Dental coverage was increased from \$750 to \$1,000 and vision from \$70 to \$100 per year. Employees will also have the option of participating in a medical spending account. The county would pay the medical expenses when they are incurred and employees would repay the county through payroll deduction in anticipation of future medical expenses. These deductions would occur before taxes. The only problems with this account are: (a) any amount left in an employee's medical account at the end of the year would revert to the county; (b) a policy would need to be implemented for collection from an employee who leaves county employment prior to repayment of medical expenses. Mark III is attempting to add more Asheville providers to the approved list. The majority of employees preferred staying with Colonial Life Insurance. Mark III will print a handbook for distribution to employees detailing the various policies. Dental and medical coverage can be separated if an employee only wants one type of coverage. A representative from Mark III will meet with employees individually to explain the plans.

(2) CASHIERS CDC PROPERTY: Mr. Westmoreland reported that an error was made in the allocation to the Cashiers CDC. \$200,000 will be moved from the Cashiers Library line item and allocated to Cashiers CDC for the acquisition of property, architectural fees, etc. The proposed budget provides for Cashiers Library expansion at the present site. The Cashiers community will repay, through contributions, the county 50% of the cost.

(3) LONGEVITY PAY PLAN: Chairman Buchanan recommended that longevity pay continue because it has improved employee morale. The rate will be \$50.00 per year of employment and it was recommended that checks be issued on the employment anniversary date. Permanent part-time employees will be paid on a pro-rata basis.

(4) 401K PLAN: Mr. Westmoreland recommended that the 1% being paid into the 401K plan be suspended and be paid directly to the employees. The 401K plan will remain in place and hopefully a better program can be found. Employees will have the option of funding their 401K plans.

(5) SOLID WASTE STAFF SALARY: A minor error was made in the proposed solid waste salary budget, but will be corrected in the final budget.

(6) REGISTER OF DEEDS: A salary error will be corrected.

(7) BUDGET APPEALS: Only two departments have requested a hearing, i.e., Sheriff's Office and Health Department. These appeals are scheduled for June 3, 2003, 6:00 p.m. Chairman Buchanan requested that the Register of Deeds appear also.

There being no further public comments, Commissioner Crawford moved that the work session be adjourned. Commissioner Madden seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote and public hearing adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Attested By:

Approved:

Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk

Stacy Buchanan, Chairman