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Posted By: Evelyn Baker
Witness: _____

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MAY 1, 2006**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on May 1, 2006, at 6:00 p.m., 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Room A201, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian T. McMahan, Chairman
Roberta Crawford, Vice Chair
Joe Cowan, Commissioner
Conrad Burrell, Commissioner
Kenneth L. Westmoreland, County Manager
W. Paul Holt, Jr., County Attorney
Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to the Board

Absent: Eddie Madden, Commissioner

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

AGENDA: Chairman McMahan amended the Agenda by adding Resolution - Jake Parris, Jr. Memorial Bridge. Commissioner Crawford moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Burrell seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Commissioner Burrell moved to approve the Minutes of the Public Hearing of April 17, 2006 and Regular Meeting of April 17, 2006. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC: Pat Beasley, Local Coordinator for Special Olympics of Jackson County, presented appreciation plaques to Rusty Ellis of the Jackson County Recreation/Parks Dept., and Toby Moore of WestCare EMS. She will also deliver appreciation plaques to the Sheriff's Dept. and N. C. Highway Patrol Troop "G". The next Special Olympics fund raiser is the "Law Enforcement Torch Run" on May 10th.

(1) FINANCE & TAX COLLECTOR REPORTS FOR APRIL 2006: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the following highlights:

General Fund Revenues Collected to Date	\$ 34,367,697.00
General Fund Expenditures to Date	\$ 32,070,881.14
Ad Valorem Tax Collected	\$ 19,870,493.71
Motor Vehicle Tax Collected	\$ 713,261.73
Sales & Use Tax for February 2006	\$ 718,102.56
Landfill Disposal Fees Collected	\$ 1,162,591.67
Contingency Balance	\$ 553,288.57

(2) BUDGET AMENDMENT:

General Fund _____ \$ 187,478.53

(3) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairman McMahan stated that the Board is invited to "County Assembly Day" at the State Legislature on May 17th.

(4) COMMISSIONERS REPORT: None.

(5) COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT: None.

(6) PLANNING DEPT. REPORT: Linda Cable, Planning Coordinator, submitted a written report which reflects that during the month of April six erosion control permits were issued along with one Cashiers Sign permit and one Off Premise Sign permit. She reported that the Chattanooga Ridge Condominium project was approved by the Cashiers Planning Council after the developer reduced the size from three to two stories.

(7) VETERANS OFFICE REPORT: Russ Bauer, Veterans Officer, gave a power point presentation. He stated the goal of the Veterans Office is to personally meet each veteran and enroll them in the Veterans Program. Numerous veterans in the county are eligible for veterans' benefits, but many of them are not aware of that fact. There are 3,529 known veterans in the county. The amount of money that veterans/widows received in FY2005 from the Veterans Administration is as follows:

Compensation and pension	\$5,425,000
Education & vocational rehab	\$ 305,000
Insurance & indemnities	<u>\$ 213,000</u>
Total received in FY2005	\$5,943,000

645 Veterans in the county are enrolled in the VA Medical Center in Asheville. Medical expenditures for those 645 veterans was \$3,336,000 in FY2005. By receiving medical benefits from the VA Medical Center, the county is relieved of the potential responsibility, since the majority are low income veterans. Total VA expenditures for the veterans in the county during FY2005 was \$9,279,000. Monthly tax free compensation income for county veterans ranges from \$112 to \$2,906 per month. Special disability compensation can be as high as \$7,500 per month. Most service connected disabilities today are those of veterans who served in Viet Nam and were exposed to "agent orange". Many diseases are being diagnosed in veterans that return from the Gulf War. The Veterans Office also assists veterans and spouses/widows in applying for education and training benefits, home loan guarantees, veteran's life insurance, burial benefits, and military benefits. He requested everyone to urge all veterans to contact his office so he can ascertain if they are eligible for benefits. He thanked the Board for allocating \$2,000 for the purchase of calling cards for the 210th Military Police Detachment while it was serving in Iraq in December 2003.

(8) WADE HAMPTON GOLF CLUB, INC.: By letter, the Wade Hampton Golf Club requested permission to exhibit a fireworks display at the Wade Hampton Golf Club on July 4, 2006 at approximately 9:00 p.m. The letter states the fireworks will be handled by Melrose Pyrotechnics, Inc.

(9) JACKSON COUNTY RECREATION/PARKS DEPT.: By memorandum, the Recreation/Parks Dept. requested permission to exhibit fireworks displays on the Historic Courthouse lawn and Cashiers Community Park on July 4th. All permits with local authorities will be secured as well as Fire Depts. and safety personnel.

(10) LANDFILL ROAD – NAME CHANGE: Mr. Westmoreland submitted an application requesting that Landfill Road, #1539, be changed to “Green Energy Park Road” as previously recommended by the Board.

(11) SMOKY MOUNTAIN CENTER (Smoky) QUARTERLY UPDATE: Tom McDevitt, Area Director, gave an overview of Smoky’s activities. On March 20, 2006 the long awaited enhanced service definitions were approved by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare services. With that implementation, Smoky has taken a major step towards having a new service array available to meet the needs of citizens. Smoky has had a \$1.2 million reduction in its LME budget which is about 17% of its operation. Smoky will continue to oversee all state funded care. The after hours screening, triage and referral was awarded to Smoky for the region of Smoky and New River. Smoky is planning a reduction in its workforce which will impact 15-20 positions as of July 1.

He stated that the Balsam Center child unit has been closed. A task force is working to determine how Smoky can address the crisis needs for children and adolescents and what can be done to replace the loss of the Balsam Center.

He stated there are new opportunities to serve adults with mental health and substance abuse issues. Smoky would be able to accept higher acuity and more involved individual and hold them in a 23-hour program while attempting to transfer them to a hospital. The key component for this service is having law enforcement at the unit for patient transfers. Smoky is reasonably optimistic a grant will be awarded to help fund this program. Smoky has been awarded a grant to develop two specialized programs for the treatment of methamphetamine users.

He thanked the Board for its past support and requested that county funding to Smoky be continued in full.

(12) KUDZU PLAYERS LEASE: Mr. Westmoreland reported that he had received a formal request from the Kudzu Players requesting a renewal of the lease which expires in October; however, their specific request is that it be a month-to-month arrangement.

(13) COUNTRY COLLECTIONS – REVOLVING LOAN & SOLID WASTE BILL: Mr. Westmoreland reported that Country Collections received a revolving loan approximately six years ago in the amount of \$12,157.52. The company is defunct and at least one of the principals lives out of state. The total amount due, including interest, as of April 30, 2006 is \$15,677.78. Country Collections also has an outstanding solid waste bill in the amount of \$174.60. The outside auditor, during the last audit report, recommended that the debts, principal and interest, be written off as uncollectible.

(14) GREEN ENERGY PARK QUARTERLY REPORT: Carry over.

(15) GREEN ENERGY PARK STEERING COMMITTEE: Mr. Westmoreland stated that with the continuing development of the Green Energy Park, the Board should consider appointing an advisory committee. There are three contracts now in place and will soon have a fourth. In addition, the greenhouses will open in June-July which will generate 2-3 additional contracts. The long range goal is for the entire operation to be self-supporting and self-directing. Thus a steering/oversight committee should be appointed to assist in those efforts. It was the consensus of the Board that the committee consist of five members, one of whom would be a Commissioner. Mr. Westmoreland also suggested that technical advisory citizens serve in an ex officio capacity.

(16) PROCLAMATION HONORING OLDER AMERICANS (R06-11): Chairman McMahan suspended the rules and Commissioner Crawford moved to proclaim May 2006 as Older Americans Month. Commissioner Burrell seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(17) PROCLAMATION – NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT WEEK & NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL DAY (R06-10): Chairman McMahan suspended the rules and Commissioner Burrell moved to proclaim May 15th as National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Day and May 15-21 as National Law Enforcement Week. Commissioner Crawford seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(18) APPOINTMENTS TO SOLID WASTE ADVISORY BOARD: Darrell Fox and Richard Wilson have agreed to continue to serve if reappointed. Commissioner Crawford recommended Harmer Weichel. All would serve 4-year terms. Commissioner Cowan moved to re-appoint Darrell Fox and Richard Wilson, and appoint Harmer Weichel to the Solid Waste Advisory Board. Commissioner Burrell seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(19) RESOLUTION (R06-09) JAKE PARRIS, JR. MEMORIAL BRIDGE: Chairman McMahan presented a resolution requesting that the bridge on U.S. Hwy 23/74 which crosses Dark Ridge Road in the Willets Community be named the “Jake Parris, Jr. Memorial Bridge”. Mr. Parris donated the land on which the original Balsam-Willets-Ochre Hill Volunteer Fire Dept. was built. He devoted his life to serving as a firefighter and died in the line of duty on February 4, 1994. He has been honored by the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and the North Carolina Fallen Firefighters in Raleigh, North Carolina. Chairman McMahan suspended the rules and Commissioner Cowan moved to adopt the Resolution. Commissioner Crawford seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Burrell moved that the Board go into Closed Session pursuant to G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3) Legal and G. S. 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel. Commissioner Crawford seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Chairman McMahan called the Open Session back to order and reported no action or votes were taken in Closed Session.

Chairman McMahan moved to amend the Agenda by adding Amended County Attorney Contract. Commissioner Burrell seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(20) COUNTY ATTORNEY CONTRACT: Commissioner Burrell moved to amend the County Attorney's contract effective July 1, 2006. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, Commissioner Cowan moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Burrell seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Attested By:

Approved:

Evelyn B. Baker
Clerk to the Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman

