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Time Posted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Posted By: Evelyn Baker  
Witnessed by: \_\_\_\_\_

**MINUTES OF A  
SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE  
JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2006**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Meeting on September 11, 2006 at 6:00 pm, Room A227, Justice & Administration Building, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian T. McMahan, Chairman  
Roberta Crawford, Vice Chair  
Joe Cowan, Commissioner  
Eddie Madden, Commissioner  
Conrad Burrell, Commissioner  
Kenneth L. Westmoreland, County Manager  
Darlene Fox, Finance Director  
Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to the Board

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order and stated the purpose was to discuss personnel needs in several departments.

**AGENDA:** Commissioner Crawford moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Burrell seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**(1) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Chairman McMahan requested a moment of silence in honor of the 9/11 victims. The dedication ceremony for the Jake Parris, Jr. Memorial Bridge is scheduled on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 p.m.

- (2) COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT:** Mr. Westmoreland reported:
- (a) The official opening of the Green Energy Park is scheduled on October 6, 2006, 12:00 noon. Smoky Mountain Biofuels will be up and running. Several artisans will also be in place. The open house will be from 12:00 – 8:00 pm.
  - (b) McMillan, Smith & Partners, Architects, for the Sylva Branch Library, are ready to move forward with pre-educational meetings with the Commissioners, Library Board and Friends of the Library for the layout and composition of the new library. They also want to know what the fundraising potential will be by the end of the calendar year. The Board will meet with the architect on October 2, 2006 at 4:00 pm.
  - (c) He has been in negotiations with Grant Tharp, Architect, concerning architectural and engineering services for a new Dept. on Aging facility. Mr. Tharp has joined a new firm - Cope & Associates. Cope & Associates has more experience with Aging/Senior Center Facilities than Barge, Waggoner & Cannon. Selection of an architect will be made at the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**(3) AGING DEPT – CERTIFICATION PROCESS:** Helen Bryson, Director, Dept. on Aging, submitted documentation concerning the North Carolina Senior Center Certification Process. With current plans for a new Senior Services facility, Jackson County should move forward towards certification for the new center. The process takes 12-24 months to complete. Should the center achieve its goal of a “Center of Excellence”, state funding would triple.

**Motion:** Commissioner Burrell moved to proceed with the certification process. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(4) ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:** Paula Carden, Health Dept. Director, stated that service demands on the environmental health specialists, particularly for septic permits and inspections, remains high. The septic inspection program is currently six weeks out. Competition for environmental health specialists is keen and the loss of trained and certified staff to other jurisdictions is a constant problem. Jackson County is losing out by not having a competitive overtime program for septic inspectors.

The following Overtime Premium Inspection Program was recommended:

- (a) **Program:** Authorize all certified environmental health specialists to participate in a voluntary weekend and holiday overtime program. Program would be limited to applicants holding five or more septic permit applications. All current site pre-condition requirements would be applicable. The weekend premium would consist of three components:

Overtime pay to inspectors at the rate of \$40/hr.  
Use of county vehicle at the rate of \$0.50 per mile  
Administration fee of 12.58% of total charge

Mr. Westmoreland and Mrs. Carden met with some realtors, developers and contractors who have no objection to the additional fees. However, inspections will still be made on a “first-come first-serve” basis.

**The additional costs will be paid by the developers, realtors, or contractors, as a part of permit fees. There will be no cost to the county for this program.**

- (b) **Restriction:** All Jackson County environmental health specialists would be prohibited from accepting secondary employment with any other county during the operation of this program.
- (c) **Extension:** All certified environmental health specialists from any other jurisdiction working for the Jackson County Health Dept. as a contract employee would be assigned to working on the multiple-lot backlog program and would be compensated according to the overtime premium inspection program. Provided, contract employees must use their private vehicles and the per mile charge would go directly to them.

**Motion:** Commissioner Madden moved to approve the Overtime Work Program. Commissioner Burrell seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(5) DISPATCH/911:** The 911 Dispatch Division is in need of an additional employee. The Division is currently authorized for one staff position that serves as a “rover”. This position is assigned to fill in when regular dispatchers are out on sick leave, vacations, or other absences, or when additional dispatchers are needed because of emergency situations. However, just one “rover” creates a situation that never seems to work out just right in terms of efficient scheduling. To remedy these situations, it was

recommended that a new position be authorized with a job description that provides for the employee to work 50% in 911 Mapping and 50% in 911 Dispatch. Further, it was recommended that the job description of the current “rover” position likewise be equally divided between Mapping and Dispatch. 911 addressing has been behind for some time. Both positions would be scheduled as to need by the Emergency Management Director.

It was recommended that this arrangement be evaluated for the balance of this fiscal year. It may be that an additional full time dispatcher would be necessary to cover all circumstances adequately. However, it could mean that the need for contract dispatchers could be reduced or eliminated. The two new half positions allocated to Mapping would be funded through the Emergency Telephone Fund at no cost to the county.

**Motion:** Commissioner Cowan moved to approve a new “rover” position. Chairman McMahan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Crawford moved to go into closed session pursuant to G. S. 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel. Commissioner Burrell 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.

**(6) SOCIAL SERVICES DEPT.:** Bob Cochran, Director, submitted documentation for additional Child Protective Services positions as follows: 3 Social Workers, 1 Social Work Supervisor, and 1 Processing Assistant III at a cost of \$147,118 - \$175,675. The reasons for the need are:

- (a) State caseload standards have changed from 12 to 10 for Child Protective Services Social Workers. Two additional positions are required in order for the county to meet those standards.
- (b) High turnover of Child Protective Social Workers is a significant state and national problem. Turnover in the county results in 1.86 fulltime equivalent positions being vacant every year.
- (c) Child Protective Services Social Workers are required to work an average of 56.10 hours of overtime every week in aggregate. This is the equivalent of 1.40 positions the agency is lacking in order to fulfill its duty to protect children.
- (d) The state standard for supervision of Child Protective Services is one supervisor for every five social workers. Currently, the county has two supervisors for 12 workers. The addition of three new social workers would bring that number to 15 which would require a third supervisor.
- (e) Children in foster care must have regular visitation with their parents. Weekly court-ordered visitation of the department’s 37 foster children requires significant staff time. A Processing Assistant III is needed to meet this need in an economical way.

Mr. Westmoreland stated that the state pays approximately 65% of the salaries. The cost to the county for three positions (2 Social Workers and 1 Supervisor) would be approximately \$40,000 and five positions would be approximately \$62,000 annually; however, it will take one to two months to fill the positions, so the cost for five positions for the remainder of this fiscal year would be approximately \$30,000 - \$35,000.

**Motion:** Commissioner Burrell moved to approve five new positions: three Social Workers, one Social Work Supervisor and one Processing Assistant III. Commissioner Madden seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Cowan suggested that an independent evaluation of the department. Mr. Westmoreland recommended, due to the cost for an evaluation, \$25,000 - \$40,000, that this request be considered in the next budget.

There being no further business, Commissioner Madden moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Crawford seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Attested By:

Approved:

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Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to the Board

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Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman