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Posted By: Evelyn Baker
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**MINUTES OF A
CAPITAL PROJECTS WORK SESSION
OF THE
JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JANUARY 29, 2007**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Work Session on January 29, 2007 at 6:00 pm, Room A227, Justice & Administration Building, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian T. McMahan, Chairman
Joe Cowan, Vice Chair
Tom Massie, Commissioner
William Shelton, Commissioner
Mark Jones, 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 FY 2007-08 Capital Projects.

(1) Dept. on Aging/Senior Center: This project would entail the construction of a new facility to serve the needs of the Dept. on Aging including office space, possibly kitchen facilities for congregate meal preparation and social hall. It would also include space for adult day care programs, multi-use meal preparation and dining as well as a general community meeting room to replace the current Community Services Building "big room".

Mr. Westmoreland introduced Grant Tharp of Cope Associates, Inc. of Knoxville, Tennessee, who was engaged several months ago to design an Aging/Senior facility. Mountain Projects had previously indicated it wished to partner with the county for construction of a commercial kitchen; however, it is now unable to secure funding. Consequently integrating the kitchen facility to serve multi-uses must be given consideration.

Mr. Tharp presented preliminary drawings for an Aging/Senior facility to be constructed at the Webster Complex. The preliminary plans allow for growth at the site. The plans include the following:

CORE:	Square Feet	Cost
Aging Services	6,500	
Senior Center	6,000	
Dining	2,000	
Kitchen	500	
Total	15,000	\$2,863,000 - \$3,000,000

ALTERNATES	Square Feet	Cost
Commercial Kitchen	4,000	\$1,323,000-\$1,500,000
Dining	2,000	(included above)
Adult Day Care	2,600	\$ 409,000 - \$ 415,000
Day Health	1,700	\$ 267,750 - \$ 270,000
Group Respite	1,350	\$ 204,750 - \$ 210,000
Total	11,650	\$2,205,000 - \$2,395,000

He stated the costs are preliminary and estimated at \$160/sq. ft. The estimated cost includes some site work, furniture, fixtures and equipment. However, the costs in the future will be much higher than stated above. The commercial kitchen is designed to feed 300 people and the dining room can be divided into three 100-seat sections.

Mr. Westmoreland stated that the concept for a commercial kitchen was if the county should decide to incorporate the Community Table, Mountain Projects, Meals on Wheels, etc., as well as to serve the general public. A kitchen specifically for the certification needs of the Aging/Senior programs would cost much less. The county has committed to the Adult Day Care program and only has a 2-year lease with Love's Chapel Church commencing February 1st.

Commissioner Massie inquired if it was feasible to consider placing a commercial kitchen in the Community Services Bldg. and build a 500 sq. ft. kitchen in the new Aging/Senior Center. Chairman McMahan stated that the county has limited space for use as an emergency shelter and dining area for emergency responders. A commercial kitchen would have on site generators. It could also accommodate the annual Employees Awards Luncheon and Emergency Services Appreciation Dinner in lieu of paying WCU for use of its facility.

Mr. Westmoreland reported on the following capital projects:

(2) **Smoky Mountain High School Campus Site Work**: This project (Phase III) is the final plan and is under contract for site work to provide for the future relocation of athletic fields, construction pads for future gymnasium and performing arts center, enlarged school bus loading/unloading and parking area, relocated faculty/student entrance road and parking area, and relocates overhead utilities underground. Storm water will be in holding areas under the parking lot. This project has been approved by the Local Government Commission and should be completed in May 2007. Cost is \$5.55 million.

The School Board has previously requested that the county consider, for future development, a new gymnasium and performing arts building. There is some planning work that still needs to be done especially as it pertains to parking. Neither facility is being considered on the capital plan.

(3) **Fairview Elementary School Kindergarten Classroom Expansion**: The Board of Education has voted and requested that this be a priority project. The project provides for six additional kindergarten classrooms, relocates the entrance road and parking areas to accommodate a new facility on site. This project is in the design phase

and is anticipated to be ready for bid in early spring 2007. Lottery funds estimated at \$250,000 could be applied to this project. Cost estimate \$2.4 million.

(4) **Smoky Mountain High School D Building**: This project has been on the capital improvement plans for several years. It has now been identified by the Board of Education to be the next capital project that must be addressed. The most critical element is replacement of the HVAC system which is obsolete and in very poor operating condition. This would entail connecting D Building to the new chiller located in the Science Building. Additional major work would include installing energy efficient windows as well as external and internal renovations. Cost estimate \$1.25 million.

(5) **Smoky Mountain High School A Building**: This project would be to complete renovations to the remaining north wing of the administration building. The renovations would be primarily cosmetic in nature including extending the new metal hip roof the full length of the building. No cost estimate available at this time.

(6) **Webster Complex Site Work Phase II**: This project would entail all the site work, road, utility, and storm water infrastructure required to provide for a pad-ready construction site for a new Dept. on Aging/Senior Center, Rescue Squad Facility, Emergency Management Center, and a new Health Dept. (if that is determined to be the optimum site). Hopefully DOT will construct the second entrance road.

(7) **Health Dept.**: Two years ago when DSS moved out of the Community Services Building, it was assumed that the Health Dept. could simply expand into the former DSS area. However, a detailed needs analysis of present and future Health Dept. space needs indicated that a new 38,000 - 40,000 sq. ft. facility to meet the needs and comply with state certification requirements is necessary. The present Health Dept. use area is approximately 28,000 sq. ft. and has been extensively renovated. A site must be determined and whether it should be near the Social Services Dept. or hospital. It is anticipated that the present facility can serve the needs of the public for the next three to five years. No cost estimate available.

(8) **Whittier Sanitary District**: Project funds have been authorized to supplement the Rural Center and other funds to provide for a wastewater collection and treatment system to serve the Whittier and Gateway Communities. The county previously committed \$406,000 towards this project. This project is under contract and county funds are anticipated to be needed some time in FY2008-09.

(9) **Solid Waste Dept.**: The Mineral Springs Transfer Station is in great need of expansion to accommodate increasing volumes of solid waste. The original facility was designed to handle 60 tons of municipal solid waste and construction and demolition debris per day. At present it is averaging 100 – 110 tons per day. Based on the projected growth in the county, a facility that can accommodate up to 300 tons per day is necessary as well as a second area to efficiently handle recyclables. There is sufficient space at the present site for expansion. Cost estimate is \$3.25 million.

(10) **Green Energy Park**: Grant funds for renovations to the former Webster Enterprises warehouse are expected; however, it is anticipated that local match funds and possibly some supplemental development funds will be needed to complete the project.

(11) **Southwestern Community College**: The balance of the local match funds to complement state bonds in the amount of \$3.2 million will be due by the end of 2008. This contribution can be in the form of cash or land/property transfers or joint projects, i.e. the county could transfer title to the Nichols property in Cashiers to SCC at an estimated fair market value of \$1.6 million.

(12) **School Bus Garage Relocation**: SCC will, in the next few years, need the site of the school bus maintenance facility for its campus expansion. This will necessitate the replacement of that facility at another location which has yet to be determined. This requirement does present the opportunity to explore the creation of a joint maintenance facility to serve both the school system and the county. This would have the added benefit of moving the present county facility from Mark Watson Park. The land where the school bus garage is presently located could be transferred to SCC at the fair market value and used as a credit towards the required match obligation.

(13) **Main Branch Library**: The previous Board committed up to \$4.2 million for the project which would provide approximately 18,000 – 20,000 sq. ft. of building space. The \$4.2 million includes \$1.2 million for furniture, fixtures and equipment. The Board also engaged an architect to conduct a facility and community needs assessment. Further, the Board funded a private fund-raising committee with the understanding that any private funds raised by the committee could be allocated to enlargement and improvement to the basic facility. The size of the facility is still undecided as well as funding arrangements.

(14) **Cashiers Recreation Complex Phase I**: This phase includes all site work, road, parking lot, water, sewer and storm water infrastructure for the six-acre complex. Bids for this project are due February 15, 2007.

(15) **Cashiers Recreation Complex Phase II**: This phase includes construction of the new 24,000 sq. ft. recreation center and a permanent maintenance/storage facility to serve the complex. At present the county is using the garage on the Nichols property for maintenance storage and SCC wants to renovate the garage for area for classrooms. All engineering and design work have been completed and is awaiting Board financing authorization.

(16) **East La Porte Park**: The county's Recreation Master Plan recommends modernization and expansion of the facility due to its popularity and high usage. Two years ago the board approved the acquisition of some adjoining property. It has the potential of being a grand riverfront park because of location, natural beauty, including a

natural island that could be linked to the park via a bridge. No developments or improvements have been made to the original park or the acquired adjoining land.

(17) **Greens Creek/Savannah Park**: Two years ago the Board approved the acquisition of approximately four acres of property off Calvary Church road for the development of a neighborhood park to serve the Greens Creek/Savannah communities. No work has been done toward the development of this facility.

(18) **Transit Facility**: The NCDOT authorized the replacement of the county's Transit Office and Bus Facility. Movement on this project was interrupted by the statewide study evaluating the need and utility of regional systems. The outcome of the study will determine whether Jackson County should/will merge with adjoining counties, continue as a stand alone transit system, or become the lead administrative unit for a multi-county transit system. The latter two options will require a new facility and NCDOT will pay 90% of all costs associated with the project including land acquisition. The results of the study should be made available within the next three to six months. The county will not be required to merge with a regional system.

(19) **Historic Courthouse**: The past Board has worked towards improvement and restoration of the building particularly as it pertains to safety and code compliance issues as well as outside appearance. To date, the dome and superstructure have been structurally reinforced and weather proofed. Currently under contract is the replacement of front and rear entrance doors which will replicate the building's original doors and the installation of an elevator to meet public building handicapped access requirements. The next major projects are the erection of a retaining wall (estimate \$50,000-\$60,000) on the rear side of the building facing Savannah Drive and the installation of a sprinkler system for fire protection (estimate \$250,000). Total cost estimate \$300,000 - \$325,000.

Commissioner Massie suggested that McMillan Smith Architects inspect the courthouse and ascertain the best use for the facility. Commissioner Jones suggested using it for a museum, Historical Society, Genealogy Society, etc. Commissioner McMahan stated that the county is in need of more meeting spaces for civic groups, organizations, etc. in addition to additional county offices. The facility will not remain vacant.

(20) **Warehouse/Storage Facility**: Due to the loss of the former Webster Enterprise Building and the old Qualla School, the county has lost the use of all its current storage space. The county is in constant need for space to temporarily and securely store surplus property awaiting disposition, confiscated property from the Sheriff's Dept., voting machines, vehicles, etc. Space is needed to house, in a climatically controlled area, a wide range of documents that must be kept from three years to permanently.

(21) **Justice Center**: Renovations to the facility with concentration on security of the court areas and ancillary offices are needed. Additionally, a review of parking is probably in order. Further, another courtroom may be needed since a third judge has been assigned to this judicial district. The Administrative Offices of the Court have

provided the county with five security cameras for the courtrooms and a receiver; however, the receiver is not compatible with the receivers currently being used by the Sheriff's Office. The county will have to pay for the installation of the cameras. The Board may wish to consider allocating funds in the new budget for installation of the donated cameras, new receiver and possibly additional cameras. The issue of smoking in and around the Justice Center needs to be addressed.

Board Comments: Commissioner Massie suggested that the county not abandon facilities that can be renovated and used for other purposes at a significant cost savings. Plans should be in place for continued use of all facilities before they are vacated. The old courthouse is now vacant; the present library building will be vacant along with potentially the Community Services Bldg. The county should investigate retrofitting other existing vacant buildings, not just county buildings, which would save paying for site preparation and thus having more funds available for renovations.

Chairman McMahan stated that in some instances it is more cost effective to build than remodel, such as the Health Dept., because the state mandates are strict concerning specialized rooms, equipment, etc. The community services building could be renovated and used for offices.

Mr. Westmoreland requested that the Board prioritize capital projects so the staff can research them in a more detailed manner and prepare a timeline along with financial obligations for a long term capital program. The county is under constraints with the Local Government Commission in terms of what can be borrowed per year in addition to self imposed restraints in terms of limiting debts that are already tax exempt.

There being no further business, Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Shelton seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Attested By:

Approved:

Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to the Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman

