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Posted By: Evelyn Baker
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**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE
JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MARCH 13, 2008**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on March 13, 2008 at 8:00 am, Social Services Building, 15 Griffin St., Sylva, North Carolina.

Present:

Brian T. McMahan, Chairman
Joe Cowan, Vice Chair
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Tom Massie, Commissioner
William Shelton, Commissioner
Kenneth L. Westmoreland, County Manager
Evelyn Baker, Clerk to Board

Social Services Board Present:

Katie Allman
Juanita Burrell
Greg Scott
Rob Sutton

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to receive DSS budget information.

Bob Cochran, Social Services Director, gave a power point overview of the kind of work the employees have been doing in recent months, significant changes in policies, and budget ramifications.

(1) **FOOD & NUTRITION PROGRAM**: 1,900 recipients in 2000; 2,900 recipients in 2007.

(2) **MEDICAID**: Medicaid Reviews: 6,600 in 2001; 11,000 in 2007.

The new Transfer of Assets Policy, a product of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, became effective November 1, 2007. The new policy requires the eligibility specialist to evaluate asset records from the past three years. If trust funds and annuities are involved, the evaluation must go back five years. In 2010, the evaluation period will increase to five previous years.

(3) **FOSTER CHILDREN**: At present, there are 56 foster children being managed by DSS; however, due to the lack of foster homes, only 23 are housed within the county. Thus, DSS staff must travel approximately 3,054 miles each month to manage the care of all Jackson County foster children. Local foster homes should be recruited so that foster children will be able to remain in their home community, remain in their own school, live closer to their family for visitation, therapy and reunification. This would save the county significant tax dollars and social workers would be able to spend less time on the highways and devote more time to working with families to keep children safe.

(4) **SPECIAL ASSISTANCE IN-HOME PROGRAM**: This is a new program using special assistance funds to help disabled adults remain in their own home and delay or avoid institutionalization. This program will save the county money by preventing disabled adults from having to enter an Adult Care facility. The average Special Assistance In-Home payment is \$269.91 compared to the average special assistance payment which is \$648.32 – a potential savings of \$371.40 for each client each month

(5) **BUDGET REQUESTS**:

(a) In recognition of the increased complexity of determining eligibility for long-term Medicaid applicants, the State Office of Personnel has recommended a salary grade increase for Long-Term Care Case Workers.

(b) Foster Care Social Worker for the Cherokee Indian Reservation (100% funded by federal and state funds).

(c) Child Welfare In-Take Social Worker.

(d) Special Assistance In-Home Social Worker. This funding source is 75% state and federal and 25% county.

(e) Katie Allman, DSS Board Chairman, requested an Assistant Director/Program Manager.

There being no further business, Commissioner Shelton moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman