

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
DECEMBER 10, 2019**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a work session on December 10, 2019, 1:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A227, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair
Ron Mau, Commissioner
Gayle Woody, Commissioner
Absent: Mickey Luker, Commissioner

Don Adams, County Manager
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Vice Chairman Deitz called the meeting to order.

(1) HONORARY NAMING / DESIGNATIONS OF STATE TRANSPORTATION ASSETS / EMPLOYEE MEMORIAL PROGRAM: Brian Burch, NCDOT Division 14 Engineer and Chris Lee, NCDOT District Engineer, were present for this item.

Mr. Adams stated that previously, the Board discussed naming roads after Thomas Wolfe and Conrad Burrell. He asked NCDOT to speak with the Board regarding processes and procedures.

Mr. Burch stated that Mr. Lee would be the point of contact to submit the information to for a road name request. The procedure required the following:

- (a) A resolution passed by the Board and if the road passed through a jurisdiction or the Eastern Band, both would have to pass a resolution, which had to be unanimous; and
- (b) A copy of the Board meeting minutes, which acknowledged that there was a party willing to pay the \$2,000.00 administrative fee, which would go toward building and placing the sign; and
- (c) Addressing and 911 signs changes were the responsibility of local government; and
- (d) If the person they would name the road after was deceased, they had to be deceased at least one year and no more than 75 years; and
- (e) They had to show family support; and
- (f) They had to obtain three letters of support from a civic group, business group or service organization; and
- (g) A completed application.

Mr. Adams stated that they would work to obtain the supporting items for the application. They would also need to have a conversation about who would pay the \$2,000.00 fee in each matter.

Mr. Burch stated that with the road naming for Mr. Wolfe, they were unclear exactly where the road limits were. Also, the policy stated that it should be five miles or less.

Mr. Adams stated that he would follow up on that information.

Commissioner Woody volunteered to contact the family of Mr. Wolfe for a letter of support. She would also work on the three letters of support from a civic group, business group or service organization.

Mr. Adams stated he would refer back to the previous application for Mr. Burrell and follow up with Chairman McMahan.

Informational item.

(2) **HEALTH INSURANCE**: Mark Browder, Vice President, Mark III; Tracy McCarty, Senior Consultant, Mark III; and Darlene Fox, Finance Director, were present for this item.

Mr. Browder presented: Medical Plan Experience Update with data through October:

(a) 2018-2019 Experience:

- In May and June of 2019, the county increased funding to the Plan. Had the funding increase not occurred, the deficit position would have been -\$1,107,959.89.
- The actual deficit position was -\$951,269.77.

(b) 2019-2020 Experience:

- The unusual runout claims from Crescent were weighing on the Plan.
- Deficit position -\$111,787.38.

Ms. Adams stated they were transitioning to a fiscal year. The Board made budget amendments at the end of last year and they also raised the rates.

Ms. Fox stated they had \$271,219 that rolled over from the prior year. So, that brought the negative position to a positive position of \$159,431.

Mr. Browder stated that the difference was that he was basing it on the budget only and there was rollover money that he had not accounted for.

(c) 2020-2021 Renewal Calculation:

- The Renewal Estimate had taken BCBSNC discounts into consideration.
- They were negotiating with BCBSNC to improve the Pharmacy contract provisions.
- The increase should be approximately 9% as there was a natural upward bias trend.

Informational item.

(3) **INDOOR POOL DESIGN**: Chad Roberson, Principal Architect with ClarkNexsen and Rusty Ellis, Recreation and Parks Director, were present for this item.

Mr. Roberson stated that they had been working with county staff and wanted to provide an update to the Board. He presented the Recreation Aquatics Center:

(a) Process:

- Information gathering with work group meetings in August and October with representatives from Aquatics, Swim Teams High School, Recreation Board and Recreation Staff.
- Operational work session to determine aquatic needs and operating costs.
- Existing building assessment, which they had done an excellent job of maintaining the facility.
- Site assessment.
- Preliminary geo-technical investigation.
- Developed two site options.

(b) Site considerations:

- Existing entry sequence and approach.
- Views of mountains and park areas.
- Adjacency to existing recreation center.
- Topography and property line constraints.
- Vehicular circulation.
- Connection to existing park amenities.
- Site placement that addressed solar heat gain and natural day lighting.

(c) Option A – South:

- The new aquatics facility was approximately 31,000 square feet and included a six lane completion pool and a leisure pool with splash pad.
- The facility would house locker rooms, a competition seating deck, party room spaces, offices and adequate support spaces.

(d) Option B – North:

- The second option placed the aquatics facility to the north of the rec center.
- Similar to Option A, the facility would house locker rooms, a completion seating deck, party room spaces, offices and adequate support spaces. It would also have a redesigned entry and front “face” from the road.
- The aquatics location would displace approximately 70 existing spaces and require new parking to be added in order to maintain the current space count.
- Visitor circulation would have one access point for both facilities.
- Positioning the pools along an east to west axis with southern facing exposer takes advantage of the solar orientation and frames a view of the park and mountains. Much like Option A, this would allow for a visual connection between the new facility and existing exterior spaces.
- Exterior spaces could be created adjacent to the pools and the park.
- The displaced parking would be replaced and added to the east and south of the existing rec center.
- Views from the aquatics center would be directed toward the south and west, keeping a visual connection to the park and optimizing solar orientations.
- A new clear and central entry would be established.
- Circulation through the new entry to the rec center or to the aquatics center.

(e) Next steps:

- Confirm the project direction.
- Develop the concept budgets for the project.
- Complete the operational study.
- Develop concept images and concept floor plan.

General discussions were held.

Commissioner Woody stated that her thought was “a” pool. Did the fact that they were looking at two pools double the costs?

Mr. Roberson stated there were increased cost associated with the second pool. One of the challenges they were faced with as they were going through the programming, was trying to meet a lot of different needs for the community. By separating the two pools, they would actually get a pool that would meet each of the individual needs.

Mr. Ellis stated he believed they would bring in more revenue with two pools as they could have activities going on at both pools at the same time.

Commissioner Mau asked if there was a preference between Option A or Option B?

Mr. Ellis stated their preference was Option B. It would create more parking and still have what they needed in the aquatics center.

Mr. Adams stated that Option B would also create a centralized entry point.

Chairman McMahan stated that one of the negatives he saw with Option B, which could easily be overcome, would be there would be much more impact on the existing operations during construction. It would be preferable if they could build the extra parking lot first.

Mr. Roberson stated that with the approval of one of the Options, they would start putting dollars to the cost of the building and site work associated. They should by that point have the operation study back to have information of how much it would cost to operate the pool on an annual basis.

Chairman McMahan inquired about any concerns about rock on the site.

Mr. Roberson stated that the geo-tech evaluation was done where they dug fourteen test pits and there was also work done in 2000. There was some rock, but it was large boulders with soft soil in between, which was not uncommon for the area. They would have to drill down 50 feet later on in the process.

Mr. Adams asked if they felt comfortable it would be similar conditions.

Mr. Roberson stated that yes, he did. With where they were in the process, they were being conservative in that approach.

Informational item.

(4) SMART FIRE SAFETY TRAINING TRAILER: Michael Forbis, Fire Marshal and Darlene Fox, Finance Director, were present for this item.

Mr. Forbis stated that they had applied for the federal grants three times and were denied each of those times. They also applied locally with the Cashiers-Highlands Foundation and the Nantahala Foundation and were denied both of those times as well. They had tried multiple times to find funding with federal and local grants.

This resource would be used not only in the county, but also regionally. They had used trailers from other areas from Mills River, Macon County and Cherokee in the past. The trainings could be done for all age groups.

The trailer would be an interactive training tool set up in three different areas:

- Interactive Kitchen: Cooking safety, weather component, emergency management preparedness
- Interactive Bedroom: EDITH drills, heated walls, smoking outlets
- Interactive Industrial Facilities: Lockout and tag out hazardous materials scenarios

Budgetary Proposal:

- 27 foot Smart Fire Safety Training Trailer: \$146,282
- Shipping: \$2,433
- On-site training: \$1,708
- Total \$150,423

Mr. Adams stated that the proposed funding related back to when the county hired the SRO's and Counselors for the schools, plus other emergency services. At the same time, they also applied for grants.

Ms. Fox stated that they received a grant to pay for three SRO's, which freed up \$130,000 for county funding for three years.

Mr. Adams stated that he proposed that those funds be used for the original intent of school safety. This would be considered a safety issue with an educational component for the schools.

Ms. Fox stated that for the remainder of the cost, they had reimbursements of \$24,000 coming back from FEMA for disaster assistance that had not been budgeted yet and would be available.

Chairman McMahan stated that he thought it was a good idea and he was supportive of it. It was the number one request from the Emergency Services Planning Committee for the last two years. He thought if they saved one life, it was worth it. The Fire and Life Safety Team did an awesome job of going into the schools to educate the youth making it fun and informative.

Consensus: *Add this item to the December 17th regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(5) VOTING MACHINES: Kirk Stephens, Board of Elections Chairman and Lisa Lovedahl, Board of Elections Director, were present for this item.

Mr. Stephens stated they had discussed the issue about replacing the voting equipment many times. The State Board had finally certified equipment. The local board had been to state conferences and mandatory training sessions and had made their selection of equipment. They chose the ES&S, which was the same manufacture of the equipment they were replacing. They used the equipment for a test in the municipal race they recently had in Sylva.

The state decertified the old equipment because the conventional wisdom now was that the ballot marking process and ballot tabulating process could not be in the same machine, which had to be two separate functions. First, the voter would go to the Express Vote and complete a ballot. It would print a paper ballot that the voter would then take it across the room and feed it into the Scanner. The Scanner would then record the ballot. That would be the process.

They had notified the State Board that this was their choice and they were waiting on them to give the go ahead. The One Stop voting for the March primary started on February 13th. They needed to get the equipment and get the poll workers trained. As quickly as they could purchase the equipment, they needed to move forward.

Ms. Lovedahl stated that they had everything in line. One item they needed to complete the process was to have the Board to release funds so that when it was ready to happen they could move forward and sign the contract.

Commissioner Woody stated that when she was in D.C., she learned that they wanted everyone to use a paper ballot so that there was evidence of the ballot. Some of it was due to cyber concerns.

Mr. Stephens stated that there were many safety measures built into this system. He had confidence in the equipment and in the integrity of the process. They did learn a lot from their test election.

Ms. Lovedahl stated that they would have enough certified equipment for the March election and they would be able to trade in the old equipment for \$61,000.

Mr. Stephens stated he was unable to tell them at that time how much this would cost, to the penny. They were estimating \$700,000 and were pretty confident they would not go over that amount.

Mr. Adams stated they had been talking about this for a long time and they were thinking \$1mil. The laws changed and they had been holding off to see if the state would come up with any funds, but that was not going to happen. They had always talked about that when they determined that the state was not going to help financially and when the Board of Elections was ready, it would be a fund balance conversation. This had been planned in the conversation financially and he did not think there was a reason for an extension any longer. They could budget the amount, but once the contract was ready, they could come back at a work session to report to the Board the details.

Consensus: *Add this item to the December 17th regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(6) ANIMAL RESCUE CENTER: Ms. Fox provided documents for the financial next steps needed to occur for the Animal Rescue Center.

Mr. Adams stated he was prepared to discuss any items with the Board at that time.

Ms. Fox stated that the resolution would authorize appropriation from the capital reserve fund to the project fund in the amount of \$5,390,000. The Capital Project Ordinance was also for the amount of \$5,390,000.

Mr. Adams stated that the construction of the entire project, which included everything except the Innovation Center, was \$3,970,686. The furniture and fixtures did match the previous budget. With the architect and civil engineering was 11%, which was high and he was still working to reduce it to 10%. The contingency was also fairly high. The numbers given previously in the CIP were \$5.5mil, but he recommended leaving those monies in place until they finished the bid. Only architectural fees would be spent until the bids were opened and the contract was awarded. At that point they would understand how much of the contingency was really needed.

If the Board chose to move forward with these two items, it would put the funding in place and his goal would be to come back to the Board at the first January meeting with finalized architectural and engineering contracts for no more than \$436,775. They had already spent \$58,500 with McMillan, Pazdan and Smith and they indicated they would credit that toward the architectural fees.

Chairman McMahan stated that if the Board was comfortable moving forward with the project, they would place the item on the December 17th agenda to consider adopting the resolution and project ordinance to pay for services as they came in. The first would be the contract with the architect and engineer contract. Later, when the bid was awarded, they would vote on that at some point next year. This would be in steps.

Commissioner Woody stated that she was in favor of moving forward. She felt that it would be a wonderful benefit to the county on several levels when they considered that this was property that the county already owned and they would be enhancing the use of it in multiple ways. She was in favor of placing the item on the agenda.

Commissioner Deitz stated that he would have to think about it.

Commissioner Mau stated that he was in favor of putting it on the agenda.

Chairman McMahan requested that the item be placed on the December 17th regular meeting agenda for consideration.

Informational item.

(7) **FIRING RANGE**: Mr. Adams stated that SCC was waiting for the updated bids. The last bid received included the upgrades and the sound mitigation. They requested that the contractor reduce the overall cost and also to separate the two items of the cost of the upgrades to the backstop and additional costs for sound mitigation. If he received the information before the next regular meeting, they could add the item to the next agenda.

Consensus: *Add this item to the December 17th regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(8) **SYLVA FIRE DISTRICT SERVICE COORDINATOR**: Mr. Adams stated that this was the same request he presented to the Board at the last meeting. John Bryson would be retiring from his position as a Fire District Services Coordinator – Sylva on January 1, 2020. Advertisement of this position vacancy would occur in the near future. The job description currently required a minimum of five years of progressively responsible experience in the Fire District Department. Mike Beck, Chief of the Sylva Fire Department, respectfully requested that the Board permit a job description change from a required minimum of five years to three years of progressively responsible experience in the Fire Department District.

Chairman McMahan stated that this was one of six positions that was funded countywide. Would this change be applicable to all six positions?

Mr. Adams stated that this would be changing the job description, so it would be for all six positions.

Chairman McMahan stated that from his experience with fire service and knowing what was required to obtain the fire fighter's certification from the state, it would be possible to do so in three years.

Mr. Adams stated that there were other items in the job description that addressed the certification.

General discussions were held.

Consensus: *Add this item to the December 17th regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(9) **COMMISSIONER MEETING AT WOLFETOWN GYM**: Commissioner Woody stated that she would request to have the meeting on April 7th at the Wolfetown Gym.

Informational item.

(10) **PART-TIME COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES POSITION**: Mr. Adams stated that he had been approached by Jennifer Abshire, Social Services Director, regarding a foster care position. This was due to the number of caseloads for foster care workers. She was currently operating within the mandatory state guidelines and also had a vacancy. At that point, he did not believe they should bring the request for the foster care workers to the Board. He thought they needed to fill the vacancy and there would be new mandates coming out in April and that would be a next budget year conversation.

She did have another need that he did not feel should wait. The foster care caseload and visitation orders were increasing. Currently, they had a full-time and a part-time position with the primary functions of helping with transport and moving children around. With the orders she was getting, they had to use higher level positions for transport, which was causing significant amounts of comp time. He requested to take the Community Social Service Assistant position from part-time to full-time. The total cost of the increase for a year was \$12,482.46, but since they received DSS revenue, the cost would be approximately \$5,000 for the fiscal year. He felt this was an immediate need.

Consensus: *Add this item to the December 17th regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(11) OTHER BUSINESS: Commissioner Deitz stated that he and Commissioner Woody were at the Monteith house on Saturday. They were in dire need of water, but they could not get under the railroad track. He was going to speak with someone from the railroad to try and get something going. He had already talked to TWSA and they were willing to put the line in, but were having a hard time getting permission to do so. Also, they were going to have to put a septic tank in instead of connecting to sewer.

Commissioner Woody stated that her son in law worked for a company that did septic systems and was also on the North Carolina Septic Board. He mentioned that if they had a nonprofit that needed a septic system, their company would donate the system. The nonprofit would need to make a request for that.

Informational item.

(12) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: Commissioner Woody moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Chairman McMahan called the regular meeting back to order and stated that no action was taken in closed session.

Chairman McMahan recessed the Board of Commissioners meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Chairman McMahan called the meeting back to order at 4:45 p.m.

(13) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: Commissioner Woody moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Chairman McMahan called the regular meeting back to order and stated that no action was taken in closed session.

There being no further business, Commissioner Mau moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman