

**MINUTES OF A  
SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
AUGUST 08, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Meeting on August 08, 2017, 3:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A227, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman  
Charles Elders, Vice Chair  
Boyce Deitz, Commissioner  
Mickey Luker, Commissioner  
Ron Mau, Commissioner

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

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order and stated the primary purpose of the meeting was to focus on the Health Department.

**(1) HEALTH DEPARTMENT:** Present for discussions: Darlene Fox, Finance Director; Shelley Carraway, Health Director; Melissa McKnight, Assistant Health Director; Jaime Dellinger, Environmental Health Supervisor; Clarissa Ashe, Business Officer I; Tony Elders, Permitting and Code Enforcement Director; and Michael Poston, Planning Director.

Mr. Adams stated that last fall, they went through a Health Department Planning Study with Ron Smith and his staff as they worked with Health Department staff to develop programming for the building. He reviewed the proposed floor plan that was developed from the study.

(a) Options that were given:

- Option 1 Renovation East then West (Approximately 2 Year Period):
  - Phase 1:
    - Construction Cost \$2,460,000.00
    - Rental Space \$48,000.00 (3200 SF @ \$15/SF F/ (1) Year)
  - Phase 2: Construction Cost \$2,160,000.00
  - Total Cost \$4,668,000.00
- Option 2 Renovation First then Second (Approximately 2 Year Period):
  - Phase 1 Construction Cost \$2,560,000.00
  - Rental Space \$90,000.00 (6000 SF @ \$15/SF F/(1) Year)
  - Phase 2 Construction Cost \$2,000,000.00
  - Rental Space (6000 SF @ \$15/SF F/ (1) Year) \$90,000.00
  - Total Cost \$4,740,000.00
- Option 3 Renovation Entire Building (Approximately 1 year Period)
  - Phase 1 Construction Cost \$4,310,000.00
  - Rental Space (19,300 SF @ \$15/SF F/(1) Year) \$290,000.00
  - Upfit Cost Estimate \$1,060,000.00
  - Total Cost \$5,660,000.00
- Option 4:
  - New Building Construction Cost \$5,615,000.00
  - Site Cost?
  - Total Cost \$5,615,000.00 plus Site Cost

Mr. Adams stated that if they started talking about adding space or changing space, the numbers were not valid. The Board did pause at this point in the discussions previously and started having discussions regarding the Skyland Service Center property (Gibson Heirs). When the Board voted to purchase the Skyland property, it did so with the understanding that it was valuable property to the county, whether a new Health Department was constructed on the property or not.

As they were evaluating the property, he asked Ron Smith to place a footprint of the Health Department on the property. Mr. Smith placed a 15,000 sq. ft., two story footprint, which would be a 30,000 sq. ft. building, utilizing the programming space they were talking about.

The last item for discussion would be regarding permitting. As they had been having discussions about the Health Department, there had also been conversations in regards to one-stop permitting and how it may relate to these conversations. He took them through the predevelopment process for them to use to make a decision:

**(b) Predevelopment Process with three scenarios:**

- Scenario 1: Property owned or leased
- Scenario 2: Property purchase without subdivision
- Scenario 3: Property purchase with subdivision

**(c) Scenario 1:**

- Customer 1: Contractor or owner/builder:
  - Justice Center to Planning Department:
    - Zoning
    - Slope
  - Justice Center to Code Enforcement:
    - Building Permit
    - Erosion Control
  - Health Department to Environmental Health:
    - Septic
    - Well

**(d) Scenario 2:**

- Customer 2: Attorneys/Surveyors:
  - Justice Center:
    - Register of Deeds: Title Search, Recordation
    - Clerk of Court: Title/Judgment search
    - Tax Collections: Certification of taxes paid. Required prior to recordation unless attorney settles at closing.
    - Tax Land Records: Review officer for plats/surveys to be recorded. Reviews other information.
    - Planning Department: Reviews combinations only.
- Customer 1: Contractors, Owner/Builder:
  - Justice Center:
    - Planning Department: Zoning, Slope
    - Code Enforcement: Building Permit, Erosion Control Permit
  - Health Department:
    - Environmental Health: Septic, Well
    - Well

**(e) Scenario 3:**

- Customer 2: Attorneys/Surveyors:
  - Justice Center:
    - Register of Deeds: Title Search, Recordation
    - Clerk of Court: Title/Judgment search
    - Tax Collections: Certification of taxes paid. Required prior to recordation unless attorney settles at closing.
    - Tax Land Records: Review officer for plats/surveys to be recorded. Reviews other information.
    - Planning Department: Approves plats and surveys for subdivision and watershed regulations. Zoning, slope.
    - Code Enforcement: Building permit, erosion control permit.
  - Health Department:
    - Environmental Health: Septic, well.
- Customer 1: Contractors, Owner/Builder:
  - Justice Center:
    - Planning Department: Zoning, Slope
    - Code Enforcement: Building Permit, Erosion Control Permit
  - Health Department:
    - Environmental Health: Septic, Well
    - Well

**(f) Customer Flow Discussion 1:**

- Combine Environmental Health, Code Enforcement and Planning into one facility when constructing the new Health Department. This could be done in a new facility or renovating the facility. Renovating the facility will require using space originally designed for the Health Department. This would improve services to Customer 1.
- Moving Planning away from the Register of Deeds may cause additional hardship to Customer 2. Planning Department duties would have to be split between two locations to avoid hardship to Customer 2. This could cause some hardship onto Planning due to a small amount of staff.

**(g) Customer Flow Discussion 2:**

- Move Environmental Health septic and well services to the Justice Center. This would provide good customer flow to both Customer 1 and 2, but would split Environmental Health into two locations. Space was extremely limited in that facility. This could cause some hardship onto the Health Department staff due to splitting up cross trained staff. Another alternative to this would be to create a permit center at the Justice Center.
- Construct new Health Department without Environmental Health - septic and well services. Or consolidate permitting with other into permit center. This could be done by renovating existing building or building new.

**(h) Customer Flow Discussion 3:** It was anticipated that the court system would need additional space in the next 10-15 years. This was above and beyond the modifications planned in the next few years. The original plan for that campus was to allow law enforcement and the court system to expand where all non-court related functions were currently located. The expansion of the court system would drive the need for a new administration building. They should keep these long-term needs in mind when deciding upon immediate administrative building space needs.

(i) Choices as it relates to the construction renovation of a new Health Department:

- Build New:
  - Build a new Health Department center designed only to meet Health Department needs. Keep Environmental Health, well and septic, separate from other permitting agencies. The county would continue to attempt to improve the process through technology.
  - Build new Health Department to include enough space to house Planning and Code Enforcement. Moving the Planning Department away from the Register of Deeds would cause hardship to Customer 2. The only way to avoid this was to split Planning between two locations. This could cause some hardship onto Planning due to the small amount of staff.
- Renovate the Existing Health Department:
  - Renovate the Health Department as designed in the last study. Keep Environmental Health well and septic separate from other permitting agencies. The county would continue to attempt to improve the process through technology.
  - Renovate the Health Department as designed in the last study. Move some Environmental Health employees to the Justice Administration Center. Space was extremely limited in that facility, which could cause some hardship on Health Department staff due to splitting up cross trained staff. Another alternative to this would be to create a permit center at the Justice Administration Center.
  - Renovate the Health Department with programming that would include Code Enforcement and Planning. This process would take another 3-6 months as it would require space originally planned for Health Department purposes to be reduced to accommodate the needs of Code Enforcement and Planning. Also, Planning may be split.

Ms. Carraway stated that this presentation demonstrated how complex the situation was. It would be great to have a decision made so that they could move forward as the current building was deteriorating. All choices listed would have someone compromising, but if they waited for a perfect solution, they probably would never move forward. She knew space was a constraint when looking at all of the options and they would make it work if they had to split Environmental Health as they were all cross trained. An ideal situation would be to keep Environmental Health together, even if that was not at the Health Department.

Mr. Elders stated that working with Ms. Carraway and Mr. Poston had been the best process they had in twenty years. He thought it was best for his staff to do as much running around as possible to save the customer from doing it. Whatever the Board decided, they would all make it work. They did have a model permitting center in Cashiers where some folks never had to drive to Sylva during the process.

Mr. Poston stated the three of them had met several times to discuss how to make their process more efficient and they would continue to do that regardless. He was a fan of one-stop as he thought there was a lot of efficiency and was good for the customer and great for the staff. He agreed there was not a perfect solution, but they would figure out how to make it work. Splitting Planning would not be ideal, as they were a four person shop, but they would make it work if necessary.

Commissioner Deitz stated it was only 2.2 miles from the Justice Center to the Health Department, only four minutes from one building to another.

Chairman McMahan inquired if the processes had ever been in the same location before or had it always been separate.

Darlene Fox, Finance Director, stated they had always been in separate locations.

Commissioner Mau stated there was one option not offered in the presentation, which was the Smoky Mountain Mental Health Building across from SCC on Bonnie Lane. Would the Board be interested in obtaining a lease on that building. During the meeting they had in February, one of the big things they heard about was that Social Services and the Health Department would love it if they were close together, that would address that issue.

Mr. Adams stated that he had contacted Evergreen, the owner of that facility about a month ago and as of that time, the building was still controlled by Vaya. In speaking with the owner, their desire would be to own the building so that they could continue to have a revenue source because the Evergreen Foundation provided grants to other programs. If they moved the Health Department there, it would be a permanent lease situation. Also, it would have to be determined if the facility would meet the needs as far as space. He thought this would be a comparable space, but there would still be issues as far as one-stop. Until it was settled with what would happen with Vaya, it was difficult to determine the facility.

Commissioner Deitz stated the building would have to be remodeled and fitted to the programming needs of the Health Department.

Commissioner Luker stated that he reached out to Evergreen Foundation that day and spoke with Marty Hydaker, who was the Chairman and CEO of Evergreen Foundation. Mr. Hydaker had an interest in trying to figure out a way that they could work with the county. Discussions had advanced since the last conversation he had with Mr. Adams. The attorneys were working on the exiting and how that worked out currently. He was not able to give a time frame of events, but did state they had made progress. If there was an interest from the county, Evergreen also had an interest. Health care workers indicated that it would make sense to have the Health Department near Social Services.

Mr. Adams stated that the Health Department discussion had been about location. They would need to determine if having the Health Department near Social Services had value for operations. They could also talk about the Health Department being near the hospital, where it was currently located. Also, he did meet with Mr. Hydaker and had the schematics of the building and the only way to have answers would be for him to go back and speak with Evergreen. The last time he talked to them, their preference was to do long-term leases and the facility was not for sale.

Ms. Carraway stated that there were pros and cons to being located near the hospital or Social Services, but it was not a requirement. However, having a county campus with Aging, would be advantageous.

Mr. Luker stated they did hear a lot that this could be a way to improve services.

Chairman McMahan inquired if the Board wanted to wait to make a decision until Mr. Adams had further discussions with Evergreen to get more concrete details and a better understanding.

Commissioner Mau stated that since they knew this option was out there, he thought they needed to do their due diligence and pursue this further with Evergreen since they did not know the terms of a lease or when the facility would be available.

Commissioner Deitz stated he thought it was something Mr. Adams should look into further, but he was not generally in favor of leasing versus buying. They said from the beginning if the Health Department moved from its current location, they would still have to do something with the old building. Also, if one-stop was involved with the decision, they needed to look at that.

Commissioner Elders stated he had watched this closely for the last several years and as he had close contact with Haywood County, they did like the one-stop they had put in place there. They needed to look at that and study if it would be a great improvement for Jackson County.

Commissioner Luker stated that the Benchmark Study recommended a one-stop and he thought everything recommended in the study had been implemented except that part.

Chairman McMahan agreed that it would be well worth looking at doing the one-stop to see if they could make it work. It worked in Cashiers and he thought they could make it work in Sylva. He did not think that would mean all of the departments would be together in an office, but maybe a permit desk would be the initial contact. They could improve on electronics and technology and with creative thinking, he thought they could make it work.

He appreciated hearing from the three departments how they had worked together and were willing to make this work. It appeared that a lot of good communication was going on.

***Consensus:*** *Mr. Adams to have further discussions with Evergreen Foundation regarding the former Vaya building. When they received follow-up information, they would schedule an additional work session.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Luker moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

---

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

---

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman