MINUTES OF A BOARD RETREAT OF THE JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HELD ON FEBRUARY 21, 2019

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Board Retreat on February 21, 2019, 1:00 p.m., North Carolina Center for Advancement of Teaching, 276 NCCAT Drive, Room 113, Cullowhee, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair Mickey Luker, Commissioner Ron Mau, Commissioner Gayle Woody, Commissioner Don Adams, County Manager Heather C. Baker, County Attorney Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **INTRODUCTIONS AND PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**: Mr. Adams stated that when they discussed this before, they were looking to have David Nicholson facilitate the meeting, but he was not able to attend as he was meeting with the state treasurer regarding the budgetary transparency issue.

He invited Michael Poston, Planning Director; Rusty Ellis, Recreation and Parks Director; and Rich Price, Economic Development Director to discuss goals and objectives of the adopted 2040 Comprehensive Plan that may have budgetary impacts.

(2) <u>2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – SUMMARY OF ADOPTED GOALS AND</u>

<u>OBJECTIVES</u>: Comprehensive Plan and Budget Impacts:

Mr. Poston presented:

(a) Education:

- Create broadband "hot spots" at community centers, recreation center, public library.
- Form a New Century Scholar type of program for vocational jobs
- Explore Supplemental Housing allowances
- Partner with the school system to increase awareness for Safe Routes to School Program
- Support apprenticeship and vocational based summer programs for k-12 and community college educational professionals
- (**b**) Public Health:
 - Support efforts to construct a new Animal Rescue facility
 - Work with health care partners to establish a mobile health services
 - Continue to provide and broaden transportation options to healthcare offices and facilities.
 - Expand community gardens on county owned land
 - Develop a food sustainability plan
 - Invest in infrastructure (sidewalks/greenway) in existing communities to increase physical activities.
- (c) Infrastructure:
 - Encourage local government coordinating with housing developers.
 - Work with critical facility owners to compile a list of critical assets, existing facilities, including age, condition and estimated life expectancy

- Coordinate with NCDOT, county, municipalities, and service providers to extend trunk lines to economic nodes
- (d) Natural Resources/Environment:
 - Educate and promote the conservation of sensitive areas
 - Collaborate with local land trust to protect sensitive areas
- Mr. Price presented:
- (e) Economic Development:
 - Promote and encourage reliable broadband solutions for rural areas
 - Explore opportunities to secure land for future development opportunities
 - Establish a business incubator for emerging businesses
 - Perform market campaign and/or analysis for the county
 - Update the county's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Mr. Poston presented:

- (f) Housing:
 - Survey existing housing inventory
 - Partner and support Mt. Projects in providing housing options to county residents
 - Research and identify public/private/ non-profit partnerships to provide more housing options to residents (i.e. Housing Trust Fund, Land Banking)
- (g) Transportation:
 - Designate funds in the county budget for local match requirements and maintenance of infrastructure projects (sidewalks/greenways)
 - Expand sidewalks, bike lanes, and greenways to housing and community centers.
 - Plan and construct bicycle and pedestrian connection between Fairview School and NC 107, Scotts Creek and the HUB with the Town of Sylva, Cullowhee Valley School and WCU and Village of Forest Hills, and between Smokey Mountain Elementary and the Qualla Boundary
 - Partner with Airport Authority to identify funding resources for airport improvements
 - Partner with WCU to create transit routes that were interconnected

Mr. Ellis presented:

(h) Recreation:

- Build trail connections between places of interest to increase accessibility by active modes of transportation
- Provide access to recreational opportunities near all major communities- Geographical Equity
- Develop pocket park in Whittier
- Expand the county's greenway system
 - Update to Greenway Master Plan
- Develop a Special Events program to host large scale events, increasing visitation to the county and generating revenue for the Parks and Rec Department to invest in sustaining programs and expanding opportunities
- Develop Cullowhee River Park/Dillsboro River Park
- R5—Goal: Indoor Pool build, operate, and maintain an indoor pool in Cullowhee, suitable for hosting year-round swim meets for youth, for fitness classes, and for physical therapy
 - Objective: Form a task force of indoor pool advocates to explore potential funding mechanisms and other logistics. Include swim team parents, physical therapists, aqua fitness instructors, etc.
 - Objective: Explore public/private partnership with Duke Lifepoint

• Objective: Fund a Feasibility Study and develop a fundraising plan

Mr. Poston presented:

- (i) Cultural Resources:
 - Conduct a county wide survey of historic properties
 - Work with the State Historic Preservation Office to become a certified local government
- (j) Land Use:
 - Develop a Cashiers and Cullowhee Small Area Plan
 - Update the 441 Corridor Small Area Plan
 - Develop a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)

Informational item.

(3) **<u>FINANCIAL UPDATE</u>**: Darlene Fox, Finance Director presented:

Financial Update:

(a) Revenues:

- Property tax
- Other tax
- Sales tax
- Sales and services
- Intergovernmental
- Debt proceeds
- Other miscellaneous
- (b) Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2018:
 - Education 23.43%
 - Debt Service 6.23%
 - Human Services 19.58%
 - General Government 16.85%
 - Public Safety 25.71%
 - Other 8.20%

(c) Fund Balance:

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		<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	2015	2016	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
Jacks	on County	35.39	41.15	44.86	43.32	45.87	49.18
Grou	р	27.84	30.49	31.19	32.77	34.18	31.63
State		26.74	27.46	27.49	28.26	28.83	30.35

(d) Analysis of property tax:

	2013	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
Jackson County	95.89	96.33	96.76	97.47	97.73	97.56
Group	95.46	96.71	97.47	97.73	98.06	98.05
State	97.30	97.97	98.59	98.79	99.04	99.10

(e) Outstanding debt as of July 1, 2019:

Date Incurred	DOLP	Interest Rate	Purpose	Amount
12/30/2005	12/29/2020	2.16%	SMH III, Cashiers Library	\$950,738.66
12/20/2007	12/20/2022	2.19%	FV Kindergarten, Cashiers Webster Site Work	\$2,311,166.59
12/11/2008	12/11/2023	2.27%	Aging Facility	\$1,251,300.07
7/15/2008	7/16/2024	2.49%	Jackson County, SCC	\$3,774,996.93
10/25/2012	10/25/2027	2.79%	SMH Gym, Fine Arts, BR Locker Room	\$5,666,666.71
3/22/2017	3/30/2032	0%	School Improvements-QZAB	\$7,800,000.00
01/30/2019	02/01/2039	3.81%	SCC Health Sciences Building	\$10,000,000.00
				\$31,754,868.96

Informational item.

(4) **FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 FINANCIAL OUTLOOK**: Mr. Adams and Ms. Fox presented:

(a) New year funding capacity for 2019:

Source of Revenue	Projected Increase	Amount
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$138,143,974 New Construction Value	\$501,639
Motor Vehicle tax	\$15,986,370 Increase in Value	\$60,748
Sales Tax	5% Increase (does not include Article 46)	\$598,647
	Total New Capacity Projected	\$1,161,034

(b) Ad valorem tax:

Source	Value
Ad Valorem Tax Value TR-1	\$9,054,265,876
New Construction	\$138,143,974
Motor Vehicle	\$362,152,377
Total Value	<u>\$9,554,562,227</u>

- Total ad valorem tax @ 0.38 per 100 = 36,307,336
- Collection rate @ 97.56% = \$35,421,437
- 1 cent on tax rate = \$932,143
- (c) Additional Fund Sources:

Capital Reserve Fund	
FY 2019 Balance	\$3,480,305.64
FY 2019-2020	\$1,000,000.00
FY 2020-2021	\$1,000,000.00
Total	\$5,480,305.64

Fund Balance	
FY 2019 Balance	\$28,425,453
Reserved by Policy 25%	\$14,523,207
Health Department	\$8,000,000
Total	<u>\$5,902,246</u>

Conservation, Preservation, Recreation Fund	
FY 2019 Balance	\$609,383
FY 2019-2020	\$500,000
FY 2020-2021	\$500,000
Total	<u>\$1,609,383</u>

Informational item.

The Board welcomed a visit and an update from WCU Interim Chancellor Alison Morrison-Shetlar.

The Board took at 30 minute break.

Chairman McMahan called the meeting back to order.

(5) **POTENTIAL MAJOR BUDGET DRIVERS**: Mr. Adams and Ms. Fox presented:

- (a) Payroll Projections for Fiscal 2019-2020:
 - The Career Path Salary Program was brought up to date during the current fiscal year.
 - Projections for a one step (2%) increase for the career path: \$354,565

- (b) Health Insurance
 - Projected 10% increase: \$448,800
 - Mark III Brokerage was doing a cost analysis and recommendation on the Health Insurance Coverage for the new year renewal effective May 1, 2019.
- (c) Funding Capacity and Budget Driver Summary:

Source	Amount
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$501,639
Motor Vehicle Taxes	\$60,748
Sales Tax	\$598,647
Total	<u>\$1,161,034</u>

Driver	Amount
Payroll	\$354,565
Health Insurance	\$448,800
Total	<u>\$803,365</u>

- Additional Capacity Available: \$357,669
- (d) Major CIP Projects County
 - Health Department Renovation: \$8,403,157.86

Funding Source	FY 2018-2019	FY 2019-2020	FY 2020-2021	Totals
General Fund Balance		\$5,000,000.00	\$3,000,000.00	\$8,000,000.00
Capital Reserve	\$403,157.89			\$403,157.86
Total	<u>\$403,157.86</u>	<u>\$5,000,000.00</u>	<u>\$3,000,000.00</u>	<u>\$8,403,157.86</u>

- Green Energy Park
 - Phase I: \$1,768,350.29
 - Phase II: \$5,286,175.12
 - Phase III: \$5,004,536.89
 - o Total \$12,059,062.30
- Justice Center Renovations: \$1,500,000

Funding Source	FY 2016-2017	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019	FY 2019-2020	FY 2020-2021	<u>Totals</u>
General Fund Balance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Reserve	-	-	-	\$150,000.00	\$1,350,000.00	\$1,500,000.00
<u>Total</u>	-	-	-	<u>\$150,000.00</u>	<u>\$1,350,000.00</u>	<u>\$1,500,000.00</u>

- (e) CPR Projects:
 - Whittier Park
 - Fairview Complex
 - Dillsboro/Cullowhee Park
 - Greenway
 - Funds available for projects for FY 2019-2021: \$1,609,383
- (f) County Capital Project Funding Capacity:

Source	Amount
Fund Balance	\$8,000,000
Capital Reserve	\$5,480,306
Fund Balance Add	\$5,902,246
Total	<u>\$19,382,552</u>

Project	Amount
Health Department	\$8,000,000
Justice Center	\$1,500,000
Green Energy Park	\$12,059,062
Total	<u>\$21,559,062</u>
Short	<u>\$2,176,510</u>

(g) Major CIP – Public Schools Prioritized:

- 1. Continue Capital Funding from FY 20182019: \$1,331,200
- 2. Baseball Field Accessibility: \$250,000
- 3. Single Entry Pints and Egress Courtyards: \$2,500,000
- 4. Football Stadium ADA Compliant Ramp and Bathroom/Concessions: \$570,000-\$750,000
- 5. SMHS Track: \$750,000
- 6. Bus Garage: \$2,500,000
- 7. Fairview Cafeteria and Blue Ridge Gym/Stage
- (h) Major CIP Public Schools FY 2019-2020
 - OCR Resolution at SMHS Baseball Accessibility \$250,000
 - Single Entry Point and Egress Courtyards current cost projection \$2,500,000
 - FY 2019-2020 Funding: \$2,750,000

General discussions were held.

(7) ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER BUDGET PRIORITIES/DIRECTION:

(a) Commissioner Woody stated that after hearing from the Board of Education about their plans for a softball complex at the Fairview fields, she would like to not move ahead with building a new press box/concession, but bring the building to the minimum safety requirements for use that year. She would not want to spend a lot of money and then it be torn down when they implement their softball complex idea.

Mr. Adams stated that the CPR Fund had \$1.6mil over the next several years. The Whittier Park was #1 and the Greenway would have been #2 based on conversations and direction he had received from the Board over the last couple of years.

Commissioner Luker stated that there was still a lot to figure out at the Fairview complex. There needed to be a lot of conversations as many used those fields.

(b) Commissioner Mau inquired about the river park concept in Dillsboro, as they already had the land. Did Mr. Ellis have any idea about the costs?

Mr. Adams stated if they took Fairview out of the conversation and talked about Cullowhee and Dillsboro - Cullowhee would be dictated by the roundabout and when it was all being built out, which could drive that another year or two down the road.

Regarding Dillsboro, there were two tracks that had been discussed. One was that there was actually a park design on that piece of property. What was actually being discussed now was a modification of the river to make it safer and to have better access. If there was a desire to have a park there, then that went away from the economic development concept of what had been attempted to be done.

General discussions were held.

Mr. Adams stated they would continue to study and find additional information for Fairview, Dillsboro and Cullowhee. If there were safety issues at Fairview, they needed to address them.

(c) Commissioner Luker stated that he felt that there was still some opportunity at the Library, even on a smaller scale, for an amphitheater around the log cabin.

Chairman McMahan stated that he would, at the least, like to do some type of analysis on the John Parris Cabin to figure out the structural status.

Mr. Adams stated he would add this item to the CPR list to put aside funds for planning.

(d) Green Energy Park: Mr. Adams stated the next steps for the Green Energy Park would be the Animal Rescue Center. They all recognized that they needed to move the SRC. He had worked within the capacity that he was trying to stay within the county's existing property. If they could find a cheaper way to move the facility somewhere, he would want to explore that.

At that point, if they were going to make progress, he would want to hire an architect to at least start designing the Animal Rescue Center. This was with the understanding that the Animal Rescue Center would be located on that property, no matter what phases they did. Was the Board comfortable with allowing him to hire an architect for the Animal Rescue Center to start the design process as that would be the next major phase. As far as the SRC, he thought there was a desire to maintain an SRC facility near Dillsboro.

Chairman McMahan stated he thought the Board agreed that if they could find an alternate location to move the SRC that would be cost effective and better logistically for the whole park concept. The Animal Rescue Center design could go on and could be included in the upcoming year budget. Was the Board in agreement for Mr. Adams to include the architectural and engineering cost for the Animal Rescue Center in that year's budget?

Commissioner Deitz inquired how the architect would know what they wanted in the Animal Rescue Center design. The last one they got a design on had every bell and whistle it could have and ended up being \$6mil. He was going to have a problem if they were talking about \$3mil for an animal shelter. At some point they needed to have a thought about how much they were willing to put into the facility.

Commissioner Luker stated they needed to know what the law required them to do and how much that would cost at a minimum. One of the animal shelter board members mentioned to him that last time when they were initially being asked to design the facility, they were given no direction.

Commissioner Mau stated he also heard that they were not given any guidance or what the Board was thinking.

Mr. Adams stated that he studied the initial plan in the research he had done and there were several items that would cost more. He also toured some facilities and paid attention to some elements of the original plans. By limiting the space to a rectangle on the existing pad, they were able to drive the cost down. When they were developing the site plan, they made sure they had open space with a combination of indoor/outdoor cages. As far as the pad went, they were set up to start the conversations about making sure they received input of what was needed, but also to start it in a controlled conversation.

As far as the schematic plans, he would start with the health department staff to start designing a facility. They would need to remember the primary job was animal control so they would need to design a facility that would meet staff needs. He would then bring in the nonprofit groups for input on the elements. He would be directly involved with the schematics and do the best he could for an affordable facility. He could not tell them what the price was going to be until they went through the process.

Commissioner Deitz stated it was all a perspective of what they wanted. They could build something that people would come from all over the world to look at, but was that what they wanted, needed and going to use taxpayer money to pay for. He thought they should have something as nice as they could build, but he thought they had to be responsible.

Chairman McMahan stated that things cost a lot more than he ever envisioned them costing. The cost was probably going to be more than they expected or hoped for. Also, he was not so sure they should do away with the current facility they had. They had an animal control facility at Cullowhee – why would they want to get rid of that. What if they used it for an intake facility and kept some staff there. They had to quarantine animals and take animals in for evaluation. Maybe strays could be picked up and then taken to the Cullowhee facility first for evaluation and to go through a process. Maybe the adoption/rescue center would be where adoptable dogs would go. Animal advocacy groups could have an office space in Dillsboro where the primary adoptions could take place. So maybe they did not have to build a huge facility, they could build a nice facility in Dillsboro and maintain the current shelter as a working clinic. That was just his thoughts on it.

Commissioner Woody stated she had very little background knowledge as far as animal shelters. She felt they needed to be good stewards of animals, but she also did not believe they held a higher place than humans. To balance that, she was on the same page as Commissioner Deitz that she wanted something as cost effective as possible, functional, safe and user friendly.

<u>Consensus</u>: Move forward with the architectural process for the Animal Rescue Center in the current budget year. Staff to start the process to find another solution for the SRC.

(e) Commissioner Luker stated that in Dillsboro there was a beautiful building on North River Road that was Riverview Baptist Church and School. The building had issues and he would hate for it to get destroyed. There were a lot of grants out there that could help with this historic building. There was so much history to preserve in the building and it was a landmark for the county.

Commissioner Deitz stated that he agreed with Commissioner Luker. He loved that building and it would be a great project.

Mr. Adams stated that he would have the Planning Department start researching opportunities for the building for a historical site.

(f) Commissioner Mau stated that a couple of weeks ago he brought up about an indoor pool about vetting a site and going through the process to have it on the ballot in November 2020.

Commissioner Luker stated he thought that more than vetting a site they needed to see what the county thought about it by putting it on the ballot with an estimate that would tell them if they liked it or they did not like it.

Chairman McMahan stated that he did not think they could just put a question on the ballot. The only thing they could do on the ballot would be a bond referendum. The Board had to make a decision to put it out as a bond referendum and then if they voted yes, they did want it, then they would move forward using bond funds.

Mr. Adams stated that it was dictated by law what could go on the ballot. If they recalled, when they vetted the architect they needed a full blown marketing plan because it was not always clear on the ballot as it had to be very specific.

Commissioner Woody suggested that Commissioner Mau head up a study group to look into getting money from the Dogwood Foundation as far as aquatic rehabilitation to be used for health initiatives. Also, maybe look at possible collaborations with other sources.

Commissioner Luker stated that it was part of the master plan that was approved and it was in the Comprehensive Plan. That could be a task for Mr. Ellis and his team with a study group. There were also other professionals that would want to take part. He heard it every day from parents that they were driving to Macon County or Haywood County for activities for their children. He thought they should invest back in the community and the youth.

Chairman McMahan stated that the last discussions revolved around whether or not to fund a study to come up with a cost estimate assuming it would be located in Cullowhee.

Mr. Adams stated they were also going to give an estimate for operating costs.

Commissioner Woody stated that she worried about the maintenance costs.

Commissioner Mau stated that they could not put the operational costs on the ballot, but they could tell people that if they voted for the bond, their taxes would go up to pay for it and how much it would cost to operate. He was in favor of the opportunity to let the people have their voice heard and let them decide if they wanted their taxes to go up to build one and fund the operations.

Commissioner Luker stated that he did not care where the location would be.

Chairman McMahan stated that to get to the point for this to be on the ballot in November of 2020, sometime between then and June of 2020, they needed to have a location and a cost estimate to build so they could get the information to Raleigh so that they could get it on the ballot in a timely manner.

Commissioner Deitz stated that he did not have a problem with that, but he thought there needed to be a conversation with the schools, the health department and the hospital. Different entities in the county would use the facility so they needed to be talking with them also.

Chairman McMahan inquired if they could have someone help them develop a survey to ask a series of questions to help gage support as well as what their uses would be as far as recreational, therapy, etc. This could be an online survey or it could be filled out at the rec center and in schools. They could then hold a public hearing where they would review the findings of the survey and take public comment. At the same time, they could have a committee to meet with different interest groups that would be stakeholders to determine the location and partnerships. With all of that information gathering maybe that would put them in a better position, because when they got to the point of a study for costs, they would have to spend \$50,000.

Commissioner Mau stated that a survey was a good idea. He received information regarding a survey and the average amount of time surveyor respondents were online was $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes and based on the number of responses it was equivalent to 22.4 hours of public comments.

Mr. Adams stated that the survey purpose would be to gage two ideas from the public, location and the desire to have a pool. They could bring in a company and statistically, correctly survey the population as a whole or have a general survey where they would do their best to get as many responses as possible. He would begin by requesting that staff develop a survey and then bring the details back to the Board.

Chairman McMahan stated he thought they needed a committee or task force made up of stakeholders to speak to the needs of the community from their standpoint.

Commissioner Woody stated that she thought they should include a question "are you willing to pay X" for a pool. Also, if they could do research to see what the operating and maintenance costs were as well. She thought that was an essential piece.

(g) Commissioner Mau stated he thought they needed to start thinking about the shooting range. They had some rough numbers from SCC and they talked a little about it when the Pepsi building came up about eliminating the environmental issues as far as adding more lead in the ground. The lease was up in 2020.

(h) Commissioner Mau stated he thought they needed to add the Smoky Mountain High School turf to the capital budget for the schools every year so that money was there. The average replacement cost was \$580,000. That was a big ticket item.

Chairman McMahan stated that when they agreed to do the turf, they stated they would look to set aside funds each year to plan for replacement costs. But when they looked at the 2024 number on the Article 46 tax revenues, they projected over \$1mil per year.

(i) Commissioner Mau stated that Mr. Price had mentioned that this may be covered in his budget, but he wanted to add redoing the Economic Development Plan.

(j) Commissioner Mau stated that broadband was always an issue. Were there any places, with relatively easy access, that the county owned property or community buildings where it made sense for them to add another tower?

 (\mathbf{k}) Commissioner Woody stated that she wanted them to consider increasing the supplement for teachers.

(I) Commissioner Deitz stated that when the school system made requests about the athletic facilities, it seemed to him that they had gotten away from the community helping with the needs. Over the years, many individuals and businesses would help with projects.

Commissioner Luker stated there was a lot to parent buy-in. They loved to be asked and be a part of it.

(m) Chairman McMahan stated that last year they tried to look at a smoke trailer for the fire departments. This year, at the Emergency Services Planning meeting, that was the number one request from all of the departments to try and work together to secure funding for the trailer. They would try to raise funds to come up with a portion and see if the county could come up with the remaining funds.

(n) Mr. Adams stated the only other thing to be thinking about would be the future financial relationship with TWSA. Also, TWSA had asked for any major projects that the towns or county wanted to look at. The other policy discussion was regarding the numbers TWSA came out regarding the water system and the wastewater system.

There being no further business, Commissioner Mau moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman