

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
AUGUST 20, 2012**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on August 20, 2012, 6:00 pm, Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Rd., Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman
Doug Cody, Vice Chair
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Charles Elders, Commissioner
Joe Cowan, Commissioner

Chuck Wooten, County Manager
J. K. Coward, Jr., Co. Attorney
Pat Parris, Clerk to Board

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

AGENDA: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Minutes of the Work Session of July 31, Work Session of August 6 and Regular Meeting of August 6, 2012. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(1) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairman Debnam reported the next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, September 4, at 2:00 pm, with a Public Hearing (financing SMHS Gym and Performing Arts project) at 1:45 pm. He attended the NCACC meeting last weekend in Raleigh. He also attended a workshop concerning "place making or basic branding" for different towns and counties and how to energize economic growth. One of the six examples given was the "Green Energy Park" in Jackson County and a good use to "brand" the Town of Dillsboro.

(2) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Wooten reported:

(a) Travel in North Carolina Counties: The NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development has issued the 2011 Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties. The report provides expenditures, jobs and payroll expenses related to travel activities across the State. Jackson County realized a 6.7% growth in travel expenditures to a level of \$66.79 million and also realized an increase in travel related jobs from 560 to 570. Jackson continues to lag far behind adjoining counties. Haywood and Macon have expenditures that almost double Jackson's expenditures while Swain's expenditures are 4.2 times that of Jackson and Swain also has 2,710 more jobs. He continues to have questions about this data and will continue trying to gain a better understanding of the key components that are driving the model used to calculate these estimates. Jackson is now 49th in travel expenditures, Haywood 33rd, Macon is 30th and Swain is 13th.

From the occupancy tax standpoint, the FY 10-11 receipts almost returned to FY 2006-07 levels. During FY 2011-12, tax collections were \$484,370.37 which is 8.5% greater than the previous year and only \$22,204.44 less than the highest revenue year. If the FY06-07 level had been maintained over the past 5 years, then lodge owners would have generated almost \$8.5 million in additional room rent revenues. Hopefully, the newly created TDA will develop a marketing strategy and a marketing plan that will continue to grow tourism expenditures in Jackson County. The greatest opportunity for growth in the short term to the County's economy is centered around travel and tourism.

(b) Community Garden Planning Grant: Jackson County has been awarded a \$10,000 planning grant which will allow the engagement of professional assistance in developing a land use plan for County property on Painter Road. This grant, combined with the one received by the Health Department, should provide the necessary funds for a highly successful project that can serve as a model for future garden developments.

(c) Smoky Mountain High School and Blue Ridge High School Capital Projects: Ten of the seventeen pre-qualified contractors have picked up drawings for the project. The mandatory pre-bid meeting is scheduled for August 21st and the bid opening is September 20th.

(d) U. S. Department of Agriculture – Wayehutta Trail: The Nantahala District Ranger has provided notification of anticipated burn rotations for certain properties located in the Nantahala National Forest in Jackson County and a re-routing project for the Wayehutta Trail. The information describes their plans and seeks any comments or concerns within the next thirty days.

(e) NCDOT – Cullowhee Bridge: An official press release has been distributed by NCDOT announcing plans for re-constructing the Cullowhee Bridge in its current location. The County will need to re-visit the commitment of providing matching funds for sidewalks once NCDOT revised plans are made available.

(3) CONSENT AGENDA: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the finance and tax collector reports for July 2012, July tax refunds total \$123.41, FY11-12 Tax Settlement reports, and 3 budget amendments.

Motion: *Commissioner Cody moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Elders seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(4) BEAVER MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: Gerald Green, Planning Director, gave an overview of the NC Beaver Management Assistance Program (BMAP) created by the state for the purpose of helping manage problems caused by beaver on private and public lands. It is designed to assist NCDOT, local governments, private landholders, and others address specific beaver drainage problems. The program is run by the USDA Wildlife Services through a cooperative agreement with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Participating counties are required to contribute \$4,000 each to the program which helps residents obtain assistance with beaver damage. Private individuals must pay a small cost share fee for services (\$20 for each site visit and \$125 for dam removal). Landholders with beaver damage problems sign up for BMAP at the Cooperative Extension or Soil & Water Offices. He recommended that the County participate in the program because the potential exists for destructive beaver damage especially in the Cashiers Plateau and in the small river valleys with farming operations in Whittier, East LaPorte, Norton and Little Savannah. Participation in the program will benefit many landowners and protect agricultural lands.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to appropriate \$4,000 from the contingency fund to the program. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(5) **COOPERATIVE EXTENSION UPDATE**: Rob Hawk, Extension Director, stated that Cheryl Beck retired after 33 years of service. A part-time employee will be hired in September. His office has received several calls concerning how to grow, prepare and preserve produce. Additional classes on this topic will be scheduled next year.

(6) **CAPITAL RESERVE RESOLUTION (R12-22)**: Mr. Wooten stated the workflow for Environmental Health, Planning, Code Enforcement, Tax Administration, and 911 Addressing have been assessed and there is a need to consolidate the processes and offer a centralized permitting office. ROK Technologies has worked extensively with the GIS and Tax Administration departments and the expansion of the GOMAPS product would include a very detailed permitting software system. The Resolution authorizes appropriation of \$225,000 from the capital reserve fund to the general fund for development of the software system.

***Motion:** Commissioner Cowan moved to adopt the Resolution. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(7) **REFINANCING RESOLUTIONS (R12-23 and R12-24)**: The Resolutions authorize refinancing of the existing debt for the solid waste transfer station, senior citizen center, Webster, Cashiers and FV:

Resolution R12-23 is for refinancing through BB&T not to exceed \$7.2 million; the annual interest rate would not exceed 2.29% and the financing term would not exceed 10 years.

Resolution R12-24 is for refinancing through BB&T not to exceed \$6.4 million; the annual interest rate would not exceed 2.46% and the financing term would not exceed 12 years.

***Motion:** Commissioner Elders moved to adopt the Resolutions. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(8) **US 441 GATEWAY DISTRICT PLANNING COUNCIL**: Gerald Green, Planning Director, stated that public meetings are still scheduled concerning amendments to the ordinance. Appointments carried over until community meetings are over.

(9) **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**:

***Motion:** Commissioner Elders moved to reappoint Maudie Phillips and Cherrie Moses to 3-year terms on the Historic Preservation Commission. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) **PLANNING BOARD VICE CHAIR**: Carry over.

Informal Comments by Public

- (a) Marie Leatherwood of Sylva stated her disapproval of the current board's appointment of Jay Coward as the county attorney.
- (b) Jim Muller of Cashiers gave an update of the results of beer and wine sales, the increase of job creations in his community and noted local appreciation of not having to drive a long distance to purchase beer and wine.

Press Conference

There being no further business, Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

W. J. Debnam, Chairman