

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JANUARY 6, 2014**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on January 6, 2014, 2:00 pm, Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Rd., Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman
Doug Cody, Vice Chair
Charles Elders, Commissioner
Vicki Greene, Commissioner
Mark Jones, Commissioner

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

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION: Chairman Debnam presented commemorative clocks and certificates to the following employees who will be retiring during the month of February 2014:

Sherry Rogers, 29 years with DSS
Dianne Parker, 27 years with DSS
Nancy Hoyle, 23 years with DSS
Tommy Wheeler, 23 years with Maintenance

AGENDA: Chairman Debnam amended the Agenda by deleting Cooperative Extension update and 441 Corridor Safety Improvements Resolution. Commissioner Elders moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 2, 2013. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(1) COMMISSIONER REPORTS: Commissioner Jones reported the county expends approximately \$6,500 per year to replace stolen 911 road signs of which approximately \$1,300 - \$1,500 is for private roads. He has noticed several signs missing in the Cashiers area and along Highway 107. These signs are of the utmost importance for local ambulance drivers who may not be familiar with the roads. He suggested that state Legislators be requested to enforce or impose a fine at a higher level for sign removal which he considers a life and death situation.

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

(a) October and November 2013 Unemployment Rates: The unemployment rates for the State of North Carolina and for Jackson County continue to decline. From a statewide standpoint, the November 2013 unemployment rate was 7.4% which reflects a decline from September and October when the rates were 8.3% and 8.0% respectively. The state rate continues to be slightly above the national rate of 7.0%; however, the gap has closed significantly over the last 12 months. From Jackson County's perspective, the rate continues to decline. The individual county rates for November will not be released until January 7, 2014; however, the county's unemployment rate for October 2013 was 6.2% which is .2% (6.4%) less than September and 1.8% (8.0%) less than October 2012. Jackson County had the 13th lowest unemployment rate among the 100 counties in October and the lowest of the six westernmost counties.

(b) 2013 Residential Building Permit Activity: There were 154 new residential building permits issued in 2013. This total was 33 (27%) higher than 2012 and was the second highest number of permits issued since the peak of the market in 2008 when 278 residential permits were issued. Over the past two years permit activity has shown a steady increase since the low point in 2011 when 105 residential permits were issued.

2013	154 New Residential Permits
2012	121 New Residential Permits
2011	105 New Residential Permits
2010	157 New Residential Permits
2009	152 New Residential Permits
2008	278 New Residential Permits

(c) 2013 Accomplishments and Highlights: 2013 was a very active and successful year. First and foremost, the Board continued the practice of taking the government to the people by holding Commissioners meetings at the Savannah and Caney Fork Fire Departments. The County's financial position is very sound as confirmed by the FY 12-13 audit report and the current budget was balanced with one of the lowest tax rates in North Carolina. A Water Recharge Ordinance was adopted and the Subdivision, Cashiers Commercial Area Development., and US441 Development ordinances were reviewed and updated following recommendations from the Planning Board. A Jackson County ABC Board, a Jackson County Travel Development Authority, a Jackson County Business and Industry Advisory Committee, and a Cullowhee Planning Committee were established. Other highlights included adoption of a Jackson County flag and the employment of an Economic Development Director. During the year there was a total of 11 employee retirements including two long serving department heads in Aging and Recreation. He is currently collecting 2013 accomplishments and 2014 challenges from each department and will be sharing that information at a future meeting.

(d) 2014 Planning Retreat: The annual planning retreat will be held on Tuesday, January 21st at the NC Center for Advancement of Teaching. He is finalizing the retreat agenda and will distribute information prior to the meeting. The retreat will begin at 9:00 am and will hopefully conclude no later than 4:30 pm allowing time to return to the Justice Center for the regularly scheduled meeting at 6:00 pm. If any Commissioner has a specific item or concern they would like to have on the retreat agenda then please share those with him. Representatives from WCU will be invited to update the Board on their recently approved master plan.

(e) Meals on Wheels: With the end of the year, there has been quite a bit of turnover with the Meals on Wheels clients. Four new clients are being added and all others that have requested service are being served. This program is realizing some negative impact from the volunteer policy as some volunteers have decided to resign from their role rather than complete the volunteer application. These voids will be temporarily covered by staff as new volunteers are recruited. The recruitment of volunteers is an ongoing activity as normal turnover occurs throughout the year.

(f) Justice Center Space Needs Assessment: The Heery Design team will be on site January 14-17th and will conduct individual interviews with building occupants and court personnel as well as assess building systems and conditions. They have tentatively scheduled a presentation of their preliminary findings at the end of the visit on the 17th and when the time is confirmed, the Board will be notified in the event their schedules would allow participation in this meeting.

(g) Board of Elections: He met with the Board of Elections on December 18th at the Skyland Services Center so they could tour the space formerly occupied by the transit department. Following the tour, they voted unanimously to relocate to the space. The preliminary plans are to complete the move by the end of January. They also discussed the need for a meeting room and improved restroom facilities. He has been working with Odell Thompson and hopes to have estimates for this work in the next week or so. He will propose adding handicap accessible restrooms and a meeting room to be used for election training, to serve as a location for one stop voting, to serve as a polling place that was formerly held in the Community Services Center, and to provide an additional public meeting space for county departments or other agencies.

(3) CONSENT AGENDA: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the November 2013 finance/tax collector/refund reports, and one budget amendment for approval.

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

(4) CDBG 10-C-2144 CLOSE OUT: Gerald Green, Planning Director, requested that a public hearing be scheduled. Chairman Debnam scheduled a public hearing on February 3 at 1:45 pm.

(5) SOLID WASTE – METAL RECYCLING BIDS: Chad Parker, Public Works Director, presented two bids for the purchase of the county's metal recycling and disposal of Freon. He recommended that the bid be awarded to the highest bidder, Metalwood Recycling, at \$9.9375 per hundred pounds which is basically 75% of the selling price.

Motion: Commissioner Greene moved to award the bid to Metalwood Recycling.
Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(6) GREENWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Motion: Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Maurice Phipps to a 3-year term on the Greenways Advisory Committee. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(12) FIREMAN'S RELIEF FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Recommendations for reappointments were submitted by the respective fire departments.

(a) *Motion:* Commissioner Greene moved to reappoint Harold Parks to a 2-year term and B. B. Cantrell to a 1-year term on the **Balsam VFD** Relief Fund Board of Trustees. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(b) *Motion:* Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Harold Nicholson to a 2-year term and Darren Messer to a 1-year term on the **Canada VFD** Relief Fund Board of Trustees. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(c) *Motion:* Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Randy Dillard to a 2-year term and Phillip Farmer to a 1-year term on the **Cashiers VFD** Relief Fund Board of Trustees. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

*(d) **Motion:** Commissioner Cody moved to reappoint Leo Webb to a 2-year term and Grady Parker to a 1-year term on the **Cullowhee VFD** Relief Fund Board of Trustees. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

*(e) **Motion:** Commissioner Elders moved to reappoint John Thomasson to a 2-year term and Nick Stewart to a 1-year term on the **Oualla VFD** Relief Fund Board of Trustees. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

*(f) **Motion:** Commissioner Elders moved to reappoint Chris Bowers to a 2-year term and Jessica Buchanan to a 1-year term on the **Savannah VFD** Relief Fund Board of Trustees. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Public Comments:

Marie Leatherwood of Sylva stated her concerns that county money may be given to GSMR.

Press Conference

There being no further business, Commissioner Elders moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.

Attest:

Approved:

Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

W. J. Debnam, Chairman