

**MINUTES OF A
RECONVENED WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
SEPTEMBER 22, 2016**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Reconvened Work Session on September 22, 2016, 2:00 p.m., Justice & Administration Building, Room A227, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Mark Jones, Vice Chair
Charles Elders, Commissioner
Vicki Greene, Commissioner
Boyce Deitz, Commissioner

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

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **NEIGHBORS IN NEED**: Mr. Adams stated that he and Chairman McMahan had met with members of Neighbors In Need and had been in discussions with them about concerns of not having enough funds to provide case management and services to make it through the upcoming cold weather season. The issues were time sensitive and included applying for and administering grants. At the previous work session, it was requested that the Board of Commissioners recess that meeting to allow Neighbors In Need to put together more information and have a more in depth discussion with the Commissioners.

Neighbors In Need Board Members present: Patsy Davis, Judy Annis, Eddie Wells, Jennifer Abshire and Neighbors In Need grant writer Marilyn Chamberlain. Board members presented:

Neighbors In Need was founded in January of 2009 to help residents of the county stay warm and safe during the cold weather months.

(a) Their mission was threefold:

- Provide a cold weather shelter;
- Help people who had difficulty paying their electric/heating costs when they were not eligible for help from any other agency; and
- Weatherize homes.

(b) They were an all-volunteer group with no overhead costs. They had paid for a case manager/social worker position with grant funds. Members came from various social agencies, churches and the community at large. They believed it was important to provide case management services to residents that were homeless in order to help them with locating permanent housing, medical assistance and work. Many of those that were homeless had mental health and other health issues that required assistance.

(c) Neighbors In Need had been in operation for seven cold weather seasons. They sheltered the homeless using various local motels, completed many weatherization projects and helped several hundred county residents to help in paying the costs of electricity and heating. Their goal had always been to work collaboratively with all other agencies in order not to duplicate services. They only served when other options were not available or when people were not able to meet the criteria for services. They also served when other agencies no longer had funds available.

(d) Shelter info:

- 2009: Shelter provided at Lifeway Church. March 1, 2009 was the first night Neighbors In Need sheltered anyone.
- 2011-12: 40 households were provided assistance with heating/electric bills for a total of \$10,111.
 - 14 households were provided with needed home repairs totaling \$3,194.
 - 32 homeless people were sheltered at a cost of \$10,725.
 - Total expenditures \$24,030.
- 2012-13: 105 households were provided assistance with heating/electric bills for a total of \$29,949.
 - 10 households were provided with needed home repairs totaling \$1,863.
 - 55 homeless people were sheltered at a cost of \$17,940.
- 2014-15: 100 households were provided assistance with heating/electric bills for a total of \$25,344.
 - 6 households were provided with needed home repairs totaling \$449.
 - 44 adults and 22 children were sheltered at a cost of \$25,619.
- 2015-16: 73 households were provided assistance with heating/electric bills for a total of \$16,172.
 - 58 people (47 adults and 11 children) were sheltered at a cost of \$33,477.
- The following totals are approximate due to not having complete data for the first two years:
 - Shelter: 240 people served at a cost of \$92,307
 - Heating: 363 households served at a cost of \$96,729
 - Weatherization: 30 households at a cost of \$5,506
 - Grand total: 633 served at a cost of \$194,542

(e) Collaborating agencies:

- Mountain Projects
- Department of Social Services
- Department on Aging
- Transit
- Family Resource Center
- Western Carolina University
- Community Table
- Good Samaritan Clinic
- East Carolina Dental Clinic
- Smoky Mountain Center
- Meridian
- Appalachian Community Services
- Southwestern Community College
- Area Churches
- United Christian Ministries
- Habitat for Humanity
- Sylva Rotary
- Colony Club Community Fund of Cashiers
- Harrah's Casino and Resort

(f) Funding:

- Charlie's Challenge annual fundraising dinner
- Two additional dinners, average amount raised from each dinner is \$10,000. The last three dinners were completely funded by Harrah's Casino and Resort.
- United Way combined giving campaign, Neighbors In Need listed as the designated recipient
- Jackson County
- Town of Sylva
- Sylva Rotary
- Grants:
 - Evergreen Foundation
 - Good Shepherd Church of Cashiers
 - Colony Club Community Fund of Cashiers
 - The Hennesee Foundation
 - Episcopal Church of Western North Carolina through Human Hurt and Hope Fund
 - Walmart
 - Great Smokies Health Foundation
 - Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
- Churches: Several churches in the county give to Neighbors In Need on a regular basis.

(g) Needs:

- Full-time director/case management position.
- Permanent office. An address was required by many foundations when applying for grants.
- Task force from the community that would help recruit more volunteers and explore creative ways to provide all three functions of Neighbors In Need.
- Ability to expand to provide services year-round.
- Expanded help from churches and community members.

Chairman McMahan stated that it had been indicated last week, when Neighbors In Need met that the question was does the organization continue to exist and move forward.

Mr. Wells stated that in the foreseeable future, they may not be able to operate at the same level because they would run out of funds. They did feel that they would have enough funds to sustain through the cold weather season this year at the same level as the past year. Last year they spent \$34,000 on motel rooms and spent close to \$17,000 for heat assistance. They received a grant for \$16,000 for case management. He requested that they work with Commissioners in the future and be part of the budget process and/or form an action group. They would like to move forward and continue to meet needs and not disband the group.

Chairman McMahan inquired about the status of the Evergreen grant, which would provide funding for case management.

Ms. Abshire stated she had spoken with Shelia Hoyle, who was the Director of Southwestern Child Development, and she had managed and housed the case manager for the past 4-5 years. Ms. Hoyle was willing to continue this and wanted to be a part of the process.

Ms. Chamberlain had written a grant to the Evergreen Foundation for \$16,000, which would be for case management. They did have \$2,000 left in the budget from the case manager last year. Also, she was working with Southwestern Commission on grant writing for other items. If the grant was approved, they would have \$18,000 to use towards a case manager position. However, there was no guarantee they would be receiving the grant. They would find out the next day.

Mr. Wells stated that if the grant was not approved, they did feel that they could make it through the cold weather season at the same level as last year. If they did continue, they would have to make some hard decisions next year. They would need partnerships to continue. The budget in the past year was \$70,000 with a part-time case manager and shelter for five months.

Chairman McMahan stated that in his personal opinion, this was a short-term temporary solution and they would need to move to a more permanent shelter. He did not know who would operate it or how. They were in the position to meet the immediate needs over the next couple of months. He thought they should create a task force to discuss the next steps.

Mr. Adams stated he thought the next steps would be to create a task force and discuss what the procedure would be in relation to the budget. Also, the task force and volunteers would need to agree on priorities, as dictated by funding.

Consensus: *Commissioners to create a task force to discuss and help with the next steps. At the regular meeting on October 6th, Commissioners would formally create a task force and appoint members.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman