

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MAY 09, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on May 09, 2017, 1:00 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

Vice Chair Elders called the meeting to order.

(1) FIRE DEPARTMENTS - ADDITIONAL EMPLOYEE REQUEST: Present for discussions: Darrell Woodard, Savannah Fire Chief; Johnny Nicholson, Balsam Fire Chief; Dustin Nicholson, Canada Fire Chief; and Mike Beck, Sylva Fire Chief.

The fire chiefs of the county requested to discuss the possibility of hiring an additional employee to work at the fire departments. Over the last seven years, the county employee position at the fire departments had proven to be a very important benefit to the communities and the county. By creating the positions, the Board of Commissioners moved fire protection forward for the citizens of the county.

One major accomplishment that had been made since the county employee was hired for all fire departments, except one, was the lowering of fire ratings for the citizens. By achieving the lower ratings, the citizens saw a large reduction in fire insurance premiums. Now that the lower ratings were achieved, they needed to be maintained, which required continual work.

Fire protection provided to the seven fire departments with funding by the Board of Commissioners was a service provided to every citizen in the county. The citizens did not have to go to a certain location to receive the service, it was brought to the citizens, wherever they were. The fire departments may be the only service provided by the county that saved the taxpayers money each year.

Below were the reasons a second county employee at the fire departments was needed:

- Fewer people willing to volunteer at the fire departments.
- Volunteers had to spend more time working on a job and less time volunteering at the fire department.
- Increased number of emergency calls, increased training hours required for certification and increased record keeping required by the state.
- More stations, trucks and equipment to maintain.
- Annual testing cannot be performed by one person.
- Review and update of pre-plans annually (close to 1,000 for some departments).
- Minor calls could be handled with an additional employee instead of calling volunteers from work.
- When equipment needed to go out of town for repairs, a volunteer would be called on to assist.
- Volunteers could be released sooner from calls to return to work.
- Employees could assist the fire marshal with fire prevention training in schools.

- The fire station could still be manned while the other employee went out for supplies or parts.
- Response times by mutual aid departments or EMS could take as long as 45 minutes to arrive on scene in some cases. This long response time could be the difference in life or death. One person could not perform CPR or fight fire for that amount of time.
- Two employees could take care of many car wrecks where only traffic control was needed and station coverage hours could be increased, if needed, by scheduling different shifts.
- Paid members could plan, prepare and get props needed for training.
- The station and district would be covered if one employee was sick or took vacation time.
- An additional employee could assist with lifting heavy items, which could help prevent a workers comp claim.
- There would be two people that could assist other departments with mutual aid.
- Two employees could better assist visitors that may stop by the fire department.
- Often, community citizens call the station for assistance with non-emergency situations, such as helping a subject back into their house or get up when they have fallen, but not injured.
- Two employees could perform firefighting efforts while awaiting volunteers. One person manning the hose and one person operating the pump.
- Two employees could perform rescue efforts, if needed, at vehicle accidents while awaiting volunteers. One person to perform patient care and one person to perform extrication efforts.
- Two employees would provide more coverage for the fire district and decrease response times to the scene of emergencies by responding with trucks and other volunteers could respond to the scene instead of going to the station to get a truck.
- Having two employees would give home/business owners more comfort knowing there were more firefighters on staff to immediately respond, if needed.
- Should a natural disaster strike the county, having two paid personnel would make it possible to man the station around the clock, if needed.
- Having two paid personnel was vital due to less and less response from volunteers due to job and family responsibilities.

Chief Woodard stated this was just a short list of reasons why they felt there was a need for a second paid employee. They realized the additional paid positions would cost many thousands of dollars to fund each year and that it could create a tax increase. But, they believed that the tax would be money well spent for the protection of the citizens of the county.

Informational item.

(2) GENERAL FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF NEW REQUESTS: Mr. Adams stated this item would inform Commissioners of the new requests that had been made and the resources that were available to meet those needs. The budget would be presented to the Board at the next regular meeting.

Ms. Fox stated usually the requests would be \$3 mil to \$4 mil. This year the requests totaled \$8,753,157.44.

Mr. Adams stated that not all of the requests would be in the recommended budget because he was starting with the premise of no new revenues and no new taxes. After this presentation, he wanted the Board to think in terms of safety, personnel and equipment.

General summary of new requests FY2017-18:

Personnel	
Career Path Reinstatement	\$979,782.57
New County Positions	\$763,624.45
New Fire Positions	\$262,037.00
Reclassifications	\$26,689.86
Hospitalization/Dental Insurance	\$294,117.12
Retiree Insurance	\$98,658.00
Workman's Comp Increase 5%	\$13,695.50
Total Personnel	\$2,438,604.50
Capital	
Equipment	\$1,618,834.62
Motor Vehicles	\$742,754.32
Capital Improvements	\$1,091,959.00
Total Capital	\$3,453,547.94
Education	
Board of Education - Operating	\$1,886,149.00
SCC - Operating	\$38,801.00
SCC - Capital	\$539,900.00
Total Education	\$2,464,850.00
Public Safety	
Increase ambulance to 24hr in Qualla	\$190,949.00
Forestry	\$45,206.00
Total Public Safety	\$236,155.00
Non-Profit Grant Applications	
Programs	\$160,000.00
Total Non-Profit Grant Applications	\$160,000.00
Total New Requests	\$8,753,157.44

*The summary requests did not include normal departmental operation requests.

Mr. Adams stated there was approximately \$1.3 mil available for growth to deal with the \$7.7 mil of new requests. They were going to take care of some of the capital needs in that year's budget with what was remaining in the budget in the amount of \$310,000, which would take care of the vehicle requests and the re-mount for the Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad. He felt comfortable with what they would be able to do with capital and what they would be presenting in the budget.

Ms. Fox started the Five-Year Facilities Capital Improvement Plan and the Five-Year Capital Plan for equipment, vehicles and improvements. Passing the budget would change the five-year plan. Also, included in the recommended budget, would be an Asset Management Program, which would help to project replacement of roofs, etc.

The budget that would be presented at the next regular meeting would have recommendations to fund some of the requests utilizing the \$1.3 mil. The Board could then choose to shift priorities.

Informational item.

(3) SUMMARY OF FY2017-18 HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN/RATE CHANGE:

Darlene Fox, Finance Director and Danielle Wittekind, Human Resource Director, presented Health Plan Changes:

- (a) Effective July 1, 2017:
 - Move Pharmacy Benefits Manager (PBM) to PharmAvail. Disruption vs. savings.
 - Change the Rx Co-Pay from \$100.00 to \$200.00.
 - Change the Rx mail order co-pay to three times the monthly co-pay.
 - Adjust Out-of-Pocket limits on both Enhanced and Standard plans to meet new ACA guidelines.
 - Individual \$7,150
 - Family \$14,500
 - Change Stop-loss contract to 15/12 with a \$50,000 Aggregating Specific.
 - 10 Reinsurance Companies
 - 4 DT
 - 2 No Response
 - 4 Quotes
 - Move location and change times for Open Enrollment to better accommodate employees.
 - Amend Summary Plan Description (SPD) to reflect changes and to insert ACA measurement periods and definitions.
- (b) Effective May 1, 2017:
 - Make amendment to plan regarding Office Visit surgeries being deductible and coinsurance CPT code changes. Precertification at \$1,250
- (c) County Medical and Dental Insurance Rates FY2017-18:

Medical Rates	Monthly	Bi-weekly
Individual (county pays)	\$800.00	
Employee/Child	\$1,010.00	\$96.92
Employee/Children	\$1,110.00	\$143.08
Employee/Spouse	\$1,110.00	\$143.08
Family	\$1,220.00	\$193.85
Dental Rates	Monthly	Bi-Weekly
Individual (county pays)	\$25.00	
Employee/Child	\$47.00	\$10.15
Employee/Children	\$59.00	\$15.69
Employee/Spouse	\$59.00	\$15.69
Family	\$81.00	\$25.85
Combined Medical/Dental	Monthly	Bi-Weekly
Individual (county pays)	\$825.00	
Employee/Child	1,057.00	\$107.08
Employee/Children	\$1,169.00	\$158.77
Employee/Spouse	\$1,169.00	\$158.77
Family	\$1,301.00	\$219.69

Ms. Fox stated as of April 30th, there was a reduction in medical claims of 7.5%, but an increase of 26% in Rx claims. They were at a point that they would have to fund more into the system as the reserves were about equal with the claims as they came in. With the above options, they hoped to see a savings of up to \$500,000 on the PharmAvail program. There would be some disruption in service, but Ms. Wittekind’s office would be working with employees and the drug companies were sending out letters to employees.

Mr. Adams stated that the goal was to take action to help improve and replenish the self-funded system so there would be a reserve in the system.

Ms. Fox stated that the way they structured the rate increase was to not have a large impact on employees and have the county pick up more of the coverage for that year.

Informational item.

(4) NON-PROFIT SUMMARY: Mr. Adams presented the non-profit grant applications FY-2017-18:

Description	FY2014-15 Budget	FY2015-16 Budget	FY2016-17 Budget	FY2017-18 Requested	FY2017-18 Recommended
Appalachian Women's Museum	\$5,000	-	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$10,000
AWAKE - Child Advocacy Center	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Barium Springs Children's Hope Alliance	\$4,856	\$5,124	\$5,124	\$5,124	\$5,124
Blue Ridge Health	-	-	-	\$45,000	-
Cashiers Chamber of Commerce	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Center of Domestic Peace	-	-	-	\$5,000	-
Christmas Connection SWCD	-	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$5,000
Community Table	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$15,000
Cullowhee Revitalization	-	\$37,500	\$5,000	-	-
Disabled American Veterans	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$1,000
Family Resource Center	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$18,000
Good Samaritan Clinic	\$45,900	\$61,400	\$61,400	-	-
Habitat for Humanity Macon/Jackson	-	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Highlands Com Child Dev	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$2,500
Jackson County Arts Council	\$9,141	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$13,000	\$10,000
Jackson County Athletic Hall of Fame	-	-	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Jackson County Chamber of Commerce	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500
Jackson County Chamber Fireworks	-	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Jackson County Historical Association	-	\$5,000	\$8,000	-	-
Jackson County Homeless Program	-	-	-	\$85,000	\$85,000
Mountain Mediation Service	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$4,000
Mtn Projects - Circles of Hope	-	-	\$1,500	\$20,000	\$1,500
Mtn Projects - Foster Grandparents	\$4,252	\$4,678	\$2,126	\$2,551	\$2,126
Mtn Projects - GED Program	\$4,769	\$4,769	\$4,769	\$4,769	\$4,769
Mtn Projects - Jackson Neighbors in Need	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Mtn Projects - Senior Companion	\$2,941	\$4,203	\$2,552	\$2,552	\$2,552
Mtn Projects - Senior Volunteer	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Nurse Family Partnership	-	-	-	\$25,000	-
REACH of Macon County	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Smoky Mtn Senior Games	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
State of Franklin	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$5,000
United Christian Ministries	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$15,000	\$4,000
Watershed Assoc Tuck River	\$20,430	\$16,780	\$11,658	-	-
WNC Communities	<u>\$2,000</u>	<u>\$2,000</u>	<u>\$3,500</u>	<u>\$2,000</u>	<u>\$2,000</u>
	\$249,789	\$295,654	\$307,629	\$438,996	\$300,071
			New Grant Programs Requested:	\$160,000	\$85,000

Mr. Adams stated that what they would see was an initial budget that was frozen with no new requests being funded, except for the \$85,000 for the homeless program. The Board would need to take up this item if they felt individually one non-profit needed more than others.

Chairman McMahan stated that in times past, these would be the standard annual requests for operating expenses, but there would be times when an organization may have a specialty request or would be trying to meet a specific need. They would come before the Board and in those cases, if approved, the Board would take the funds out of contingency.

Commissioner Deitz stated he thought the Nurse Family Partnership would be a good program to support, but thought it would be fair to hear a presentation at a work session with more information about the program.

Ms. Fox stated that the recommendation for non-profits would be to hold everyone at the same level and not fund any new programs, except the Homeless Program. If there were any other non-profit request, they could come back before the Board.

Informational item.

There being no further business, Commissioner Elders moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman