

**MINUTES OF A  
SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
AUGUST 28, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Meeting on August 28, 2017, 4:00 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

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order and stated the primary purpose of the meeting was to focus on the Health Department.

**(1) HEALTH DEPARTMENT:** Mr. Adams stated that after the Board's last discussions, he did reach out to Ron Smith regarding utilizing the Vaya Building (Smoky Mountain Mental Health Building) as a potential candidate for the Health Department. In a letter, Mr. Smith provided a brief assessment:

He reviewed the plans of the Smoky Mountain Mental Health Building (designed by McMillan Pazdan Smith in 1996). He compared the space program for the Health Department to the plan and developed a list of renovations, changes and upgrades to the building that would be required to accommodate the Health Department needs:

- The public entry, vestibule and waiting area would need to be greatly expanded. It would require a complete renovation of approximately 25%-35% of the first floor area.
- The Management Support areas would need to be located adjacent to the waiting area, requiring a complete renovation of an additional 25%+/- of the first floor area.
- The Clinic Area would require the remainder of the first floor to be completely renovated.
- The Main Lab and Phlebotomy Lab would require an addition to the building in order for them to remain adjacent to the Clinic. They could move upstairs, but their function would be compromised and an additional space on the upper level would need to be renovated for the use.
- The upper level would require the renovation of several smaller rooms so that they could be converted to accommodate the need for some larger rooms on the upper level.
- The building was almost 20 years old and with HVAC systems nearing their life expectancy. For the required renovations in the building, new ductwork would be required.
- The building was designed in 1996, using the current Building Code at that time. The renovations described above would require that the building meet current Building Code requirements. An in-depth study would be necessary in order to determine the necessary upgrades to the building.

- The program for the Health Department was for approximately 30,000 SF of space. The Smoky Mountain Mental Health Building was approximately 20,800 SF. The deficiency would require the omission of spaces or the enlargement of the building.
- The incorporation of additional restrooms, laboratories and sinks for Clinical Space would require water and sewer renovations and upgrades throughout the building.
- There were other programmatic issues and concerns that had not been addressed in the above comments. In order to determine the exact suitability of the Smoky Mountain Mental Health Building for use by the Health Department, a more in-depth study would need to be completed.

Commissioner Mau stated he thought that with this additional information, this option was eliminated.

Chairman McMahan stated this brought them back to square one, which was to either renovate the existing Health Department Building or construct a new building.

Commissioner Luker inquired if they made the decision to renovate, would that include One-Stop as well or as separate items because it would have an impact either way.

Mr. Adams stated that if they attempted to move One-Stop into the facility, he did think it impacted other programming, such as moving Inspections and Planning. If Planning was moved from its current location, it would impact services for customers with land transactions and services at the Health Department. He also thought they would immediately have a facility that would be out of space.

Commissioner Luker stated that the building, as designed currently, had a lot of extra space. For example, there were four people working in WIC currently and there were eight rooms programmed.

Mr. Adams stated that some of the space was planned for growth.

Commissioner Luker stated they had not seen growth in the Health Department in several years.

Mr. Adams stated that to meet all needs and every customer, the real solution would be to move Environmental Health to the Justice Center. They were talking about moving Planning out of the building, but it had connections with other entities in the building. If they wanted to squeeze One-Stop into the current Health Department Building, he thought they would immediately fill all of the space. Also, he thought they would create the separate issue of what would they do with Planning if they moved it from its current location.

Commissioner Luker stated they heard from Michael Poston, Planning Director and he stated that he was willing to do whatever.

Mr. Adams stated that all groups had stated they were willing to do whatever. The second part of that was if those groups were asked if they prefer to not split their operations, none of them would want to do that.

Commissioner Luker stated that employees could be managed in different locations that was not an impossibility.

Chairman McMahan stated he liked the idea of Code Enforcement and all of the other services being in Justice Center. In Cashiers, they had a Permit Center that was basically a One-Stop. What would be the problem with being able to pull at least some staff from Environmental Health to the Justice Center and use technology to be the One-Stop Shop for this end of the county, similar to what they did in Cashiers. It would make more sense to him for that to happen at the Justice Center than to try and move everyone else to the Health Department Building.

Commissioner Luker stated that different individuals, as well as two builders, had an issue with coming through the Justice Center security and having to unload everything and undo their boots in order to come through. Especially, if someone was building a new house and needed to visit very often and had to unload everything to get to Permitting.

Commissioner Elders stated they also needed to keep in mind about the future and the need to eventually to start moving some out of the Justice Center and now would be the time to keep that in mind.

Commissioner Deitz stated that with all of the technology, could they not go to one place and take care of what someone would need.

Commissioner Mau inquired if the Register of Deeds was moving to accept electronic filings.

Ms. Baker stated it was starting in that direction, but it still had a long ways to go.

Chairman McMahan stated that he agreed with Commissioner Elders that in ten years they would be forced to construct a new building on the campus. It would make more sense that it would be a new court facility rather than a new administration building, which they could eliminate security then for the administration building.

Mr. Adams stated that there was not a perfect solution without building a new administration building on the campus. The Board would need to decide which option was more important.

Chairman McMahan stated if security was not an issue, would this then be an issue.

Commissioner Luker stated there would still be a space issue.

Commissioner Elders stated they may want to keep the Vaya Building in mind as well.

Commissioner Luker stated ten years ago the Health Department Building housed many more employees than now and it was manageable. They could go back to Ron Smith and ask him to incorporate the remaining sections on the second floor.

Mr. Adams stated he needed to understand where they wanted Planning and Code Enforcement to be. Also, would they split Environmental Health or Planning as there would be impacts to operations.

Chairman McMahan inquired if any of the Commissioners wanted a new building or go back and change the programming of the current Health Department to fit the needs.

*There were no Commissioners that indicated that they wanted to move forward with the construction of a new building.*

Mr. Adams stated they could redesign and reprogram the second floor to move Planning and Code Enforcement there with the idea that there would be some type of singular area to apply for a permit. This would reduce the space that was indicated as a need by the Health Department in the study.

Commissioner Luker stated he was in favor of making it a One-Stop Permitting Center.

Chairman McMahan stated they could divide Planning, potentially and house part of them at the Justice Center and part of them at the Health Department. Was that likewise with Code Enforcement, could they remain partially at the Justice Center and at the Health Department.

Mr. Adams stated he would try to reprogram the entire left side of the building and move all of Planning and all of Inspections there. At that point, they would need to make a choice of either have "Customer 1" stop by the Health Department before they come and recorded or set up a temporary basis to have the subdivision officer at the Justice Center on a schedule. He would recommend to attempt to move them all into that facility.

Commissioner Deitz stated he thought they should give the Health Department the entire building. If there was something left over at the end, then they could use it for something else. He thought, if they were going to do the One-Stop, they should find somewhere to put them, if that meant building a new facility. He thought they were moving a lot of people out of the Health Department into the Skyland Center and then filling that space back up with the same amount of people that came out. He was not in favor of that. He felt it was a solution looking for a problem.

Commissioner Elders inquired if would it be worth thinking about making the Health Department Building, just Health Department and constructing another building, maybe on the Skyland property they just purchased, for the One-Stop and include Environmental Health and maybe others.

Commissioner Luker stated that the Health Director would still have to supervise because of her credentials.

Chairman McMahan stated they would split people out no matter what they did.

Commissioner Mau stated he did not have a problem with splitting people out. They could manage that and make it work technology-wise.

Chairman McMahan stated he liked the idea of having a separate location that would be a permit center and leave the Health Department Building for the Health Department.

Commissioner Luker stated he liked that idea, but he did not think they were in the position to do that.

Chairman McMahan stated that if they left everything as it was currently, they could go ahead with the remodel and get that building finished and get the Health Department taken care of. That would give them a couple of years to be looking and thinking about where to plan for a One-Stop Permit Center to put everyone together.

Commissioner Luker stated he was not in favor of postponing it.

Mr. Adams stated the questions were if they wanted to split Planning away from the rest of the operations and if they want to do it in the existing facility or build new. That was really the key questions for him because if they want to fit it in the Health Department Building he would have to reprogram it or if they wanted to build new, they would still need to figure out how to add enough space for Planning and Inspections.

Chairman McMahan stated that he would hope that by the time they did this, the technology would allow for them to just have a front counter like they had in Cashiers. He thought that could work now.

*Commissioner Luker, Commissioner Mau and Commissioner Elders were in favor of requesting that Ron Smith reprogram the Health Department Building to include a One-Stop location with Planning and Inspections.*

*Chairman McMahan and Commissioner Deitz were not in favor of reprogramming the Health Department to include Planning and Inspections.*

Mr. Adams stated the next step would be to create a scope of services with Mr. Smith. He would then bring that contract before the Board for approval. Ultimately, he would ask Mr. Smith to come back in and they would start having meetings with Environmental Health, Planning and Building Inspections. He would also look at WIC on the first floor. His goal would be to move as quickly as they could. He also thought that no matter what they did, the Vaya Building would have a role in the conversation, especially in transition.

Chairman McMahan requested that they explore the possibility of adding on to the footprint of the building also for a point of entry for the One-Stop Center.

Commissioner Deitz stated that in his viewpoint, the only thing this would accomplish would be to make it easier for a couple of contractors. Was the cost they would be putting into this be worth the reward that those few contractors would have it that much easier.

**(2) COUNTY MANAGER REVIEW PROCESS:** Chairman McMahan stated today's purpose was to see if there were any additional questions or changes to the evaluation or the process for the County Manager Review.

Commissioner Elders stated he wanted to have feedback from Department Heads. He wanted to be as fair as possible.

Chairman McMahan stated that Mr. Adams worked directly for the Board and they were his supervisors. He thought it would be difficult to gage Department Head opinions and use it in a fair way.

Commissioner Luker stated that information would be included on the Employee Engagement Survey.

Mr. Adams stated that he was comfortable with the process that had been described.

**Consensus:** *The Board agreed on the process and questions on the evaluation form. The Commissioners would complete the evaluation form over the next two weeks and discuss the item in closed session on September 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Mau moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Luker seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

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Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman