

Date Posted: March 24, 2003
Time Posted: _____
Posted By: Evelyn Baker
Witness: _____

**MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION
OF THE
JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MARCH 20, 2003**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on Thursday, March 20, 2003 at 4:00 p.m. in the Justice & Administration Building, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Room 203, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Stacy Buchanan, Chairman
Roberta Crawford, Vice Chairman
Joe Cowan, Commissioner
Eddie Madden, Commissioner
Brian McMahan, Commissioner
Kenneth L. Westmoreland, County Manager
Darlene Fox, Finance Director
Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to the Board

Commissioner Crawford moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Chairman Buchanan called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of the work session meeting is to plan for the upcoming FY2003-2004 Operations Budget.

(1): COMMUNITY CHILDCARE PROJECT. Shelia Price, WestCare Health Systems, presented a program concerning the need for a childcare facility in the Scotts Creek/Beta community area. The “partners” in this project are Southwestern Child Development Commission, WestCare Health System, Jackson County School System, Region A Partnership Children, Wal-Mart, other area employers, Jackson County DSS and Health Departments, and Mountain Projects. She explained the continued need for reliable quality childcare in the county. A survey was conducted and the results included the needs for: (a) childcare services in a more timely manner (waiting lists of 4-6 months, longer for infant care); (b) non-traditional hours/days, etc.; (c) facility in the Scotts Creek area; (d) care for ages 0-5+ years; (e) extended after school care for school age children; (f) “Sniffle Care”. The project plan includes construction of a 2-story facility located on the campus of Harris Regional Hospital. The first floor would house a 5-star rating childcare facility consisting of 6,500 sq. ft. The program would be licensed for 68 preschool children and 20 for after school care. The second floor would house a Community Health Resource and Learning Center. The total estimated cost is \$1,736,000. A request for \$150,000 from the county was made which could be paid over a two-year period.

(2) **JACKSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**: Michael Cartwright, Librarian, presented a historical overview of per capita support by Jackson, Macon and Swain Counties. He explained the need for additional personnel and salary increases. At present Fontana Regional Library is responsible for staff and their payroll. The library is operating below state guidelines, not only in personnel, but books per capita, print materials, audiovisual materials, electronic information services and programs. He requested \$136,000 that could be paid over a four-year period.

Discussion was had concerning partnering the library with Southwestern Community College. A study is underway concerning a new facility that would be constructed on the SCC campus.

(3) **SCHOOLS**: Dr. Mack McCary, David Steinbecker and Arlin Middleton addressed the board and requested an increase in local funding. According to their calculations, local funding accounted for 19% of revenue for FY 2002-03. Local funding enables the school system to provide 32 classroom teachers, 10 teacher assistants, 17 custodians, 6 maintenance personnel, 10 office support personnel in the schools, and pay the 11th month of employment for assistant principals. A request was made for \$5,824,838 for operating expenses and \$905,222 for capital outlay, a total of \$6,730,060.

Chairman Buchanan called for a brief recess for refreshments.

(4) **SALARIES**: It was suggested that longevity pay and step increase be continued; however, longevity checks be distributed at the Awards Luncheon in December rather than on the anniversary date of employment. Further, the current 1% 401K contribution be added to salaries and the employee make the choice of whether to fund their 401K plan. This would equal a 3% salary increase plus longevity pay.

(5) **EMERGENCY SERVICES FUNDING**: Chairman Buchanan suggested that a value be established for each fire department and substation and that an increase of 2% of the value be budgeted.

(6) **OTHER**: Discussion was had concerning the need for a fulltime Fire Marshal, funding for restoration of Historic Courthouse, property tax, solid waste, and combining school and county grounds departments.

There being no further business, Commissioner Madden moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner McMahan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Attested By:

Approved:

Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to the Board

Stacy Buchanan, Chairman