

Posted: October 8, 2003  
Time Posted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Posted By: Evelyn Baker  
Witnessed By: \_\_\_\_\_

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
OCTOBER 7, 2003**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Joint Meeting with the Town of Sylva, Town of Webster, Town of Dillsboro and Village of Forest Hills on October 7, 2003, at 6:00 p.m., Justice & Administration Building, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Room 203, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present were:

Board of Commissioners:  
Stacy Buchanan, Chairman  
Roberta Crawford, Commissioner  
Joe Cowan, Commissioner  
Brian McMahan, Commissioner  
Eddie Madden, Commissioner  
Kenneth Westmoreland, County Manager  
Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to Board

Town of Sylva:  
Brenda Oliver, Mayor  
Ann Cabe  
Audrey Tritt  
Eldridge Painter  
Richard McHargue

Town of Webster:  
Skip Englebright

Town of Dillsboro:  
Jean Hartbarger, Mayor  
James Cochran

Village of Forest Hills:  
Richard Iobst

Chairman Buchanan called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss matters, which any one of the units feels to be of interest, potential benefit or potential harm to any or all of the other units.

**(1) MINUTES:** Mayor Oliver moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular meeting of May 6, 2003. Commissioner Tritt seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(2) AGENDA:** Chairman Buchanan recommended amending the Agenda by adding WNC Local Government Caucus. Commissioner Crawford moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Iobst seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(3) TOWNSHIP DEVELOPMENTS:**

**Dillsboro:** Mayor Hartbarger reported that the Town is continuing negotiations for the Monteith property. Hopefully construction can commence within the next year or two.

**Village of Forest Hills:** Commissioner Iobst reported that the Village is using Powell Bill money for road improvements. A connector road has been built between North and South Country Club Roads. A Greenway is being planned and will connect to the Cullowhee Valley School and Jackson County Recreation Park.

**Sylva:** Richard McHargue, City Manager, reported that the sewer project in the Moody Bottom area is near completion and plans are to install approximately 400 ft. of sewer on the opposite side of Scotts Creek which will serve 12 residences. The Town is partnering with a WCU fraternity for a complete renovation of Bryson Park. New playground equipment should be installed next spring. A new driveway to the park is under construction. New patrol cars have been purchased. The Town has resumed in-town trash service and anticipates annual savings of approximately \$30,000.

**Webster:** No report.

**(4) WNC LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAUCUS:** Mayor Oliver reported that the Caucus was formed about a year ago for the purpose of having more representatives on boards and commissions throughout the state and to seek federal and state funding. During an analysis of the state, it was discovered that the western part of the state was lacking in receiving any grants from federal and state agencies. Thus, a Caucus was formed to represent the counties from Caldwell County west. Region A's task is seeking money from federal funding streams. Visiting Washington, D.C. to lobby for those funds is one task the caucus is committed to. Late February or mid-March is the time frame considered to be most effective. The caucus decided it would alternate dates to coincide with NACCO and NLC meetings. Any projects that have regional effects and that can be defended are projects the caucus is looking for. These projects need to be submitted to the Local Councils of Government to be selected for inclusion to the list of projects that the caucus can lobby for. Mayor Oliver suggested a regional solid waste disposal site/system. She requested that the Mayors submit suggested projects to her, Mr. McHargue or Mr. Westmoreland. They can attribute a \$5 million stream of money through the direct efforts of the Caucus.

**(5) COUNTY DEVELOPMENTS:** Chairman Buchanan gave an update of the Smart Growth recommendations that were adopted by the county on July 25, 2002:

(a) Pro-active Long-Range Planning: Hire a planner and staff to develop a comprehensive land use plan. The comprehensive land use plan will provide a long-range vision as to how the county can provide for orderly future physical and economic growth. The plan must also cover various government and non-government functions such as affordable housing, education, public safety, water & sewer, recreation, transportation, health care, and economic development. The Board has authorized subcommittees (task specific) to assist with the development of various parts of the plan.

(b) Plans are to hire a Planning Coordinator/Ordinance Administrator on October 14<sup>th</sup>.

(c) Contracted with Gerald Green, Certified Planner, for professional services;

(d) Appointed a 7-member Smart Growth Task Force. A countywide transportation plan is needed. A Resolution will be presented at the next Board meeting that will request that this issue be assigned to the Smart Growth Task Force who will work with the Statewide Planning Unit and Rural Transportation Planning Organization.

(e) Appointed a new 7-member Planning Board. This board is responsible for all future ordinance development/administration. In addition, this board will also codify all present ordinances and prepare a handbook for use by the general public.

(f) A 5-member task force is currently reviewing the Animal Control Ordinance.

(g) A 5-member task force is currently reviewing the Soil & Sediment Ordinance.

(h) The Smart Growth Task Force has developed a working draft of a subdivision ordinance. The Board will be scheduling work sessions commencing on October 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 p.m. to review the ordinance. The tentative adoption date is the summer of 2004.

(i) Recreation Master Plan – the county is in the process of hiring a consultant to work on the plan. As a result of working on a master plan, the county has received a grant in the amount of \$180,000 for a recreation park at the Old Canada School. Other monies will be available after the master plan is complete.

(j) Cashiers Commercial District Plan was adopted in August 2003.

(k) Provide for adequate emergency services by increasing funding to current system. A detailed Emergency Services Funding outline was furnished which reflects budgeting for the fire departments and rescue squads through 2005. Construction of a new fire substation for Caney Fork should be underway shortly. Site work has commenced for a new Balsam Fire Station.

(l) Preserve small town/rural nature of the county by creating a walkable community by obtaining easements and assist in developing operations and maintenance plan. Action Updates:

- (1) Greenways project for the Dillsboro to Cullowhee connection;
- (2) WCU Trail to Recreation Center Trail;
- (3) \$10,000 annual funding Greenways Commission for grant match;
- (4) Bike trail from Hwy 116 to WCU/County Match;
- (5) Cashiers Community Center – Library-SCC-Village Green;
- (6) SCC (Library-Wellness Center-Campus) to DSS Property.

Other future planning issues to be addressed by the Board are:

- (a) Voluntary, non-regulatory approaches to Smart Growth;
- (b) Affordable Housing;
- (c) Water & Sewer Infrastructure.

County Projects and Activities:

(a) A new Boardroom and administrative offices are under construction and should be available in the next two to three weeks.

(b) The Library Task Force has been studying a joint use facility with SCC and is presently advertising for an architect/engineer consultant and library consultant.

(c) Bids for a new Social Services Department building will be in by October 21<sup>st</sup> and a contract should be awarded in early November. Will be working with DOT in developing a master plan to handle future growth on that site.

(d) The new jail has been awarded clearance by the state and prisoners should be moved into the new facility later this week.

(e) Smoky Mountain High School – Phase II, addition of 12 classrooms; hopefully bids will be submitted this month.

(f) The Cashiers Library project is moving forward.

(g) The Cashiers Community Center is in the planning stages. Property has been acquired for the expansion.

(h) A site for a new SCC facility in Cashiers is under negotiation.

**(5) MUNICIPAL GRANT:** Chairman Buchanan stated that the purpose of the grant is to assist the municipalities of the county with the implementation of worthy projects that will directly benefit not only the citizens of the municipality, but also all of the citizens of the county. Applications for the grant will be taken during the month of October. The Board of Commissioners will review the applications in November and grant awards will be announced at the first Board meeting in December. Grant requests shall be limited to a maximum of \$20,000. This allocation is from the general fund.

**(6) WCU UPDATE:** Tom McClure reported that enrollment, 7,600 for the fall, is a record high. The average SAT scores for incoming students was 1023. The Honors College has an enrollment of 879 students with average SAT scores of 1235. Applications are up 100% over this time last year which means that WCU has become a first choice school. The new Workforce Development Center has the most cutting edge technology available and houses a Music Studio that is the only one in the United States in a university setting. Students will be trained in commercial music production. Construction on the new Performing Arts Center is continuing and after completion the theatre will accommodate Broadway shows. He explained that the impact on the county with the anticipated increase in enrollment is 50-60 new per-year-on-campus jobs (based on 500 new students per year) will be created, along with increased housing demands with a potential financial impact of over \$3 million to the county. There are several construction projects underway on campus including a new dorm and road. WCU has an option to purchase property on Long Branch Road.

**(7) AIRPORT:** Tom McClure reported that the Airport Authority Board is in the process of doing a 20-year strategic plan. FAA is in the process of installing some very sophisticated equipment at the airport (weather and surveillance). NCDOT Aviation Division requires a 1,200' terminal space and increase the runway to 4000'. Twin engine planes land at the airport on a regular basis. At present there are 14 planes on the waiting list. Gas prices at the airport are very competitive. Construction on the new terminal should commence shortly. The airport will receive a \$3 - \$5 million investment over the next five years from federal and state sources. He stated that the airport is an asset to the county.

**(8) SCC UPDATE:** Gene Couch reported that fall enrollment is 1,937 which is a record enrollment. SCC is offering three new programs: practical nursing, evening and weekend practical nursing, and surveying. SCC has started to move forward on the bond projects. The Balsam West Fiber Net from Jackson to Macon County is under construction.

**(9) EDC UPDATE:** Tom McClure, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, reported that a retreat for the EDC Board is being planned to redefine what that board needs to do, the need for a broader concept and the need for more attention to service industry (medical community, housing, arts & crafts, tourism, construction, etc.). A number of the new housing developments in the county will create new jobs. As WCU expands, new jobs will be created in addition to construction jobs. The board is currently working with four manufacturing prospects that have expressed an interest in the county.

The board is working closely with two local companies, Clearwood (10 employees) and QC Apparel (40 employees) who are struggling. Clearwood is attempting to redefine its product line. QC Apparel is having a hard time competing in the textile market.

**(10) TUCKASEIGEE WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY:** Mickey Luker, Chairman, reported that TWSA entered into the fourth quarter averaging one million gallons of water per day from the Cullowhee plant. A grade of excellence has been received at the Cullowhee plant and it is in full compliance. TWSA is in the process of seeking funds for construction of a larger distribution line (12") from the Cullowhee water treatment plant to the tie-in near Jack-the-Dipper on Hwy. 107 and two water storage tanks. This project will cost approximately \$1.75 million. The Cashiers waste water treatment plant is operating hydraulically and biologically. The board has authorized Mr. Montgomery to proceed with expansion at Cashiers and those improvements will cost \$1.3 - \$1.6 million. The biggest problem at the Jackson plant in Dillsboro is bio-residuals (sludge). The potential cost for resolution of this situation is \$900,000 to \$1.2 million. Wastewater Treatment Plant #2 was designed to come off line; however, the crew has been able to restore it at an approximate cost of less than \$40,000 for approximately seven more years of service. A new replacement plant would cost \$2 - \$2.5 million. A comprehensive wastewater collection analysis has been completed.

**(11) SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING:** April 6, 2004, 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, Commissioner McMahan moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Crawford seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote and the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Attested By:

Approved:

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Evelyn Baker, Clerk to the Board

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Stacy Buchanan, Chairman