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Time Posted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Posted By: Evelyn Baker  
Witnessed By: \_\_\_\_\_

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
FEBRUARY 7, 2011**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on February 7, 2011 at 2:00 pm, Justice & Administration Building, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Room A201, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman	Chuck Wooten, Interim County Manager
Doug Cody, Vice Chair	Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to Board
Charles Elders, Commissioner	David Moore, Temporary County Attorney
Mark Jones, Commissioner	
Joe Cowan, Commissioner	

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

**AGENDA:** Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**MINUTES:** Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 18 and Work Session of January 28, 2011. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**(1) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Chairman Debnam reported that on February 1, he and Commissioner Jones met with representatives from Duke Energy, Trout Unlimited, Cullowhee Revitalization, and Region A to discuss ways they could work together to achieve common goals, i.e., greenways and other enhancement projects along the Tuckasegee River.

**(2) COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:** Commissioner Jones stated the meeting referred to by Chairman Debnam could result in alleviating duplication of efforts on the same project and potentially save a lot of money particularly on landscaping at the Dillsboro Dam site.

Commissioner Cody stated he attended the quarterly Emergency Management meeting at the Balsam Fire Dept. last week.

**(3) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:** Mr. Wooten presented a summary of activities since the last Board meeting.

(a) **FY10-11 Budget:** Department Heads have been instructed to reduce spending on activities funded from county revenues by 3% between now and June 30. This action was taken in response to the shortfall in tax values and corresponding decrease in tax revenues. As part of this action, restrictions have been placed on travel and purchases of capital equipment. In addition, the December 6<sup>th</sup> hiring freeze remains in effect. Slowing down the use of part-time employees was recommended.

(b) **Past Due Rents:** Demand letters were sent to three tenants who are past due on their rents and return receipts indicate the letters were delivered. Two tenants have responded; however, no payments of past due rents have been received. The letter provided 20 days for response.

(c) **Revolving Loans:** He is working with the County Attorney to ascertain what options there are to bring the loans current.

(d) **FY11-12 Budget:** Discussions with the department heads about the upcoming budget will begin in the next few days. They have already been given a heads up to expect tax revenues and other county generated revenues to be less in FY11-12 than were budgeted in FY10-11. This will translate into a need to reduce the upcoming budget funded from county revenues 3-5%.

(e) **Capital Projects:** He is continuing to gather information about the status of each authorized capital project. The new library should be completed within the next 2-3 months.

(f) **County Owned Property:** He has been approached by at least two parties inquiring if the county would be interested in leasing or possibly selling county owned property. Over the next couple of weeks, he will be reviewing the actual properties the county owns. This is a good time to assess the usefulness of properties for both the short and long term.

(g) **Ambulance Contract:** The WestCare Ambulance Contract expires on June 30, 2011. WestCare is interested in continuing the service and will be submitting a proposed contract shortly.

(h) **Tax Collections:** During the recent Work Session, discussion was had concerning requiring payment of taxes prior to recording deeds. Jackson County is one of the counties listed in the original legislation that has that authority. It is just a matter of the Board adopting a Resolution implementing the requirement.

(i) **Unemployment Rates:** The December 2010 report reflects Jackson County's rate was 8.8% which is higher than November 2010, but improved over the December 2009 rate which was 9.2%. Jackson County has the lowest rate of the eight counties listed in the report.

**(4) ADULT ESTABLISHMENTS ORDINANCE:** Sheriff Ashe stated the need for an Adult Establishments Ordinance was brought to his attention during the time when the casino was considering offering liquor by the drink. The law allows individuals to open clubs in residential areas and could serve liquor outside the Qualla Boundary. With that came the stigma of creating strip joints for businesses that have adult establishments and the sale of alcohol in the county. This became a concern for his office because it would be difficult to regulate and the problems that usually stem from those types of establishments. The county cannot prohibit establishments, but can regulate them. He recommended adoption of an ordinance.

Gerald Green, Planning Director, stated the purpose of the ordinance sets forth the regulatory licensing requirements for adult establishments located within the county. The ordinance requires an application, criminal background check, location, licenses, fees, etc. A one year \$5,000 fee would be required and \$2,500 for entertainers that may be employed therein. The Planning Board has reviewed and recommends adoption of the ordinance. The County Attorney has also reviewed the proposed ordinance.

Chairman Debnam scheduled a public hearing on March 7 at 1:30 p.m.

**(5) COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN:** Ryan Sherby, Southwestern Commission Regional Planner, presented a summary of how the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) was developed and North Carolina's new multi-modal transportation plan format and process. The 2010 Jackson County CTP replaced its 1994 Thoroughfare Plan. Prior to NCDOT dedicating planning and engineering resources to produce a CTP, a county must have an adopted land use plan no older than five years. Jackson County adopted a CTP on December 21, 2009 as did the four municipalities.

Governor Perdue issued an Executive Order calling for transportation reform at NCDOT. A Strategic Planning Office of Transportation was created to refine a transparent and easy to understand ranking of projects statewide. As part of this effort, the Southwestern Rural Planning Office (RPO) must submit its top 25 projects for the six-county region every two years. The RPO has its own methodology based on qualitative and quantitative metrics. Without individual county input, the whole regional prioritization effort would inadequately reflect the priorities of the region. There are three players in the process – the state as a whole, the local DOT division, and the RPO.

The Planning Board and Smarts Roads advocacy group have submitted their top priorities. A list has also been requested from the Town of Sylva. He requested the county to submit a list of six priorities within the next couple of months.

Mr. Wooten stated that because a CTP has been adopted and projects have been identified, the challenge to the Board is reviewing the 15 projects and rank them 1-15. The rankings will then be compiled and submitted to the Board for a determination of the top six.

**(6) THE COMMUNITY TABLE:** Amy Grimes, Director, thanked the Board for the \$35,000 appropriation last year for renovations to the former Golden Age Center, the Community Table's new home. She thanked the county maintenance department for their assistance with the project. WCU Professor of Construction Management, Bob Ford, and his students are also an integral part of the project as are other volunteers from the community. She anticipates the building will be ready for occupancy by the end of 2011. In 2009, 10,335 dinner meals were served which increased to 20,393 in 2010 for an average of 99.5 meals per night. She requested an appropriation of \$10,000 for general operations in the upcoming budget. She also requested a waiver of the building permit fee.

Chairman Debnam requested that she furnish the Board with her operating budget with a breakdown of payroll, meals and other expenses.

**(7) WEBSTER ENTERPRISES:** Gene Robinson, Director, stated Webster Enterprises plans to create a lot of jobs. Webster Enterprises is one of the nine members of Marketing Association for Rehabilitation Centers, Inc. (MARC). The Waynesville facility employs 359, a \$30 million budget and three facilities. The Andrews facility employs about the same number with an annual budget of just under \$30 million. Webster manufactures surgical drapes which are sold to a third party for distribution to hospitals. He has developed a three-phase process to turn the program around. The first phase is getting the building and systems up to code by the end of this fiscal year at a cost of approximately \$200,000. The second phase is expansion of manufacturing and new equipment which will increase training and job opportunities. He stated that many orders previously outsourced out of the country are returning. Of the current 57 employees, 35 are from Jackson, 18 from Macon and 4 from Swain. He projected doubling the number of employees within a year or so. He requested a \$50,000 revolving loan and a \$50,000 line of credit. He also requested an appropriation of \$20,000 in the county's up-coming budget. He will also be requesting \$20,000 each from Macon and Swain Counties for the next fiscal year.

**(8) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OFFICE:** Rob Hawk, Director, stated his office made over 7,936 face-to-face contacts and 39,995 total educational contacts in 2010. The extension office helps people help themselves for a better quality of life. The 2010 four major program areas were:

**(a) Environmental Stewardship:** The educational programs are designed to enhance the sustainability, profitability of local agriculture and horticulture which led to 1,378 participants increasing their knowledge of best management practices to increase net farm incomes.

**(b) Improving Health & Nutrition:** 1,375 youth and adults participated in improving their nutrition and exercise in order to improve their health.

**(c) Youth Development Needs:** 2,255 youth participated in Jackson County 4-H programs. 138 youth increased their knowledge in imperative skills such as communication, critical thinking, decision making, science and technology.

**(d) Sustainable Agriculture Systems:** An agent works extensively with Christmas tree growers, landscaping industries and farmers' markets.

(9) **PLANNING DEPT:** Gerald Green, Director, presented a proposed 2011 work plan for the Planning Department which includes Cashiers Community Plan, Sylva Downtown/Mill Street Project, Forest Hills/WCU Project, Planning Study for the NC107/116 Intersection area, and County Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Board projects include a review of the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Mountainside Dev. Ordinance, Multi-Family Dev. Ordinance, and Junked & Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance. As part of the goal to provide a higher level of planning assistance in promoting the efficient and sustainable growth and development of the county, his office will continue a community outreach program and providing assistance to other departments. He is taking steps to establish a relationship with the Home Builders Assoc.

(10) **TUCKASEIGEE WATER & SEWER AUTHORITY:** Carry over.

(11) **PLANNING BOARD:** By memo, Zac Koenig volunteered to continue to serve. Commissioner Elders recommended Holly F. Hooper of Whittier. Chairman Debnam recommended Mark Jamison of Webster.

***Motion:** Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Zac Koenig, appoint Holly Hooper and Mark Jamison, all for 3-year terms on the Planning Board. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(12) **GREENWAYS ADVISORY BOARD:** Kent Cranford and Allan Grant have volunteered to continue to serve.

***Motion:** Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Kent Cranford and Allan Grant to 3-year terms on the Greenways Advisory Board. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(13) **WATERSHED REVIEW BOARD:** Carry over.

(14) **WHITTIER SANITARY BOARD:** Carry over.

**INFORMAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC:**

- (a) Jennifer Dirkes, R.E.A.C.H. Director, invited the Board individually or in groups of two to visit the facilities. She also requested an appropriation for R.E.A.C.H. be included in the next fiscal year budget.
- (b) Carl Iobst of Cullowhee stated the “Welcome to Jackson County” sign on Cowee Mountain is in disrepair. He stated he had read a news article about a private non-profit foundation from Texas who may be interested in donating funds for the purchase of at least two automated external defibrillators for the Justice Center.

**PRESS CONFERENCE**

**CLOSED SESSION:**

***Motion:** Chairman Debnam moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3) Legal (Jackson Paper tax) and G. S. 143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property (leases). Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

Chairman Debnam called the regular meeting back to order and stated no action was taken in closed session other than approval of closed session minutes. Instructions were given to the county attorney to request a 30-day extension to respond to Jackson Paper's petition. Responses to the demand letter from two of the tenants were discussed.

There being no further business, Commissioner Elders moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Attested By:

Approved:

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Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to Board

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W. J. Debnam, Chairman