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Posted By: Evelyn Baker
Witnessed by: _____

**MINUTES OF A
BUDGET PLANNING SESSION
OF THE
JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
FEBRUARY 18, 2010**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Planning Session on February 18, 2010 at 6:00 pm, Room A227, Justice & Administration Building, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian T. McMahan, Chairman	Kenneth L. Westmoreland, County Manager
Tom Massie, Vice Chair	Darlene Fox, Finance Director
Joe Cowan, Commissioner	Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to the Board
William Shelton, Commissioner	
Mark Jones, Commissioner	

Vice Chair Massie called the meeting to order and stated it was a budget planning session for FY10-11.

(1) CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, stated that routinely the policy has been to use the CPI published for the southern region. The recommendation for this year is “zero”, thus no cost of living increase.

(2) EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM: Effective July 1, 2010, the local government retirement system has increased the employer rate from 4.91% to 6.46% for local employees and 4.86% to 6.41% for law enforcement. The rate increase will cost approximately \$238,657.53.

(3) GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE: The renewal calculations presented by Mark III Benefits reflect a 20% premium increase. There are two options: pay the new premiums in full and keep the same coverage (90/20), or reduce the deductible to 80/20. The 80/20 option would reduce new premium costs by approximately 15%.

(4) BUDGET DEVELOPMENT: There is the possibility the state may make secondary road maintenance and mental health services the responsibility of counties. The county will need to be very conservative this budget year especially since state funding is unknown. It was recommended that each entity and/or individual who wishes to make a budget request provide a detailed financial report on how the requested funds would be used.

(5) **PROJECT GOALS/OBJECTIVES**: Mr. Westmoreland presented an “Evaluation & Prioritization of Capital Projects” form to be used for all capital projects. The Board would then assign weighted values/points to each project for evaluation and prioritization.

(6) **CASHIERS RECREATION FACILITY**: Site work should be completed by mid-spring with the paving of the parking lot and roads which includes a road to the county offices facility. The Garden Lane entrance to the county facility will then be closed. The design work for the recreation center is complete. An Evaluation & Prioritization form must be submitted for evaluation.

(7) **TUCKASEIGEE MILLS FACILITY**: Liability insurance on the facility will expire June 30 because it does not meet county codes and must be completely renovated. This facility was acquired from Jackson Development Corp. in the same state of disrepair. At present there are three business tenants occupying the facility with a combined total of approximately 60 employees. All leases expire in March/April. The estimated cost for renovation is approximately \$500,000+. Overdue rents must be addressed.

(8) **SMH GYM/PERFORMING ARTS BLDG**: Funds for a needs assessment/feasibility study has been budgeted; however, before a consultant can be hired, the issue of a combined or stand-alone facility must be determined. The School Board may need to decide which facility is most needed. The school will also need to submit plans for the proposed utilization of the current facilities. Mr. Westmoreland will immediately prepare an RFQ for the assessment/feasibility study. At present, 25% of the county’s general fund is appropriated to the schools. A joint meeting with the School Board will be scheduled at SMH at a later date.

(9) **MARK WATSON PARK**: The existing storm water drain system is inadequate and must be repaired immediately. A master plan for the park needs to be developed to possibly include a veteran’s memorial park, walking trails, use of wetlands, July 4th fireworks celebration site, and status of the old rock building (renovate or remove), etc.

(10) **PRESENT LIBRARY BUILDING**: County staff will assess the facility so a determination can be made concerning county space needs.

(11) **CONGRESSIONAL EARMARK PROJECTS**: Congressman Shuler has requested the county to submit a list for possible congressional earmark projects.

(12) **TUCKASEIGEE COMMUNITY BLDG**: A request has been made for a community building in the Tuckaseigee area at a future date.

(13) LOCAL WORKERS & VENDORS: Because local tax money is what is used to construct facilities, it was recommended that a county policy be developed to encourage contractors who are awarded capital project bids use local subcontractors and tradesmen or, at a minimum, locals be given an opportunity to submit bids. The policy should also encourage the use of local vendors for building materials wherever possible.

The next budget work session will include a presentation of projected revenues and expenditures.

There being no further business, Commissioner Cowan moved to adjourn the work session. Commissioner Shelton seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Attested By:

Approved:

Evelyn B. Baker, Clerk to the Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman