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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
JULY 18, 2011**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on July 18, 2011, 6:00 pm, Justice & Administration Bldg., Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Rd., Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman
Doug Cody, Vice Chair
Charles Elders, Commissioner
Mark Jones, Commissioner

Chuck Wooten, County Manager
J. K. Coward, County Attorney
Evelyn Baker, Clerk to Board

Absent: Joe Cowan, Commissioner

Chairman Debnam called the meeting to order.

AGENDA: Chairman Debnam amended the Agenda by deleting Old Library Property and adding Resolution - Old Library Property. Commissioner Elders moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 20, 2011. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(1) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Wooten reported:

(a) **Veterans' Office:** Ronald Putnam, NC District Office of Veterans Affairs has indicated that Jackson County has reached the size in veteran population (3,547) and should consider providing a second veterans officer or at a minimum consider funding for part-time clerical assistance. Mr. Wooten will evaluate this request. Brenda DuBose is providing outstanding assistance and county veterans are receiving approximately \$14.5 million in annual benefits. Veterans from surrounding counties also visit her office for assistance because of her good reputation helping veterans.

(b) **Unemployment Rates:** The May unemployment rate was 8.8% which is an increase from the April 8.4% rate. Jackson County's rate is less than the surrounding counties.

(c) **Ambulance Contracts:** WestCare and the Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad have signed temporary ambulance agreements. The county attorney is finalizing a five-year contract for both agencies and should be available in August.

(d) **Fire Dept. Contracts:** The county has received signed contracts from all volunteer fire departments. The Town of Highlands provides fire protection for several county residences located outside the Town but has not signed a contract and requested further discussions concerning the payment formula

(e) **Mark Watson Park**: The low bidder was Site Development Corp. with a base bid of \$277,465 which is under budget. Work should commence within the next 2 to 3 weeks.

(f) **Southern Lumber Bldg.**: Odell Thompson has completed programming for allocating space to the Cooperative Extension Office, Soil & Water Dept., Board of Elections, Veteran's Service, and Housing. Mr. Thompson will present his findings at a future work session.

(g) **Caney Fork Storm Damage**: The Caney Fork areas sustained substantial damage from the June 15th storm. A number of large trees were blown over into the stream channel. A request has been submitted to the Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) for funds to remove the debris from the stream channel. If funded, NRCS will provide a grant for 75% of the clean-up costs and the county will need to cover the remainder in cash or in-kind services.

(h) **Tax Revaluation**: The revaluation process is moving along and a work session will be scheduled for an update on preliminary findings and discussion of the procedures being used.

(i) **211 Program**: The six westernmost counties agreed to provide matching funds for the program and Duke Energy has deposited matching funds with the United Way.

(j) **Legislative Updates**:

Human Services Administration: The bill is eligibility for consideration during the 2012 short session.

Community Colleges: The bill to consolidate small community colleges will impact SCC. There has been a significant amount of opposition to the bill. A sub-committee was formed which will report to the full committee at some future date.

(k) **WCU Chancellor**: A breakfast reception is scheduled on July 22, 8:00 a.m. for all elected officials to meet the new Chancellor, Dr. David Belcher.

(l) **County Website**: A new and updated web site is now available

(m) **Sheriff's Dept.**: Connie Brooks has retired and Shena Phillips has been appointed to fill that position. Shannon Queen has been promoted to Major replacing Steve Lillard. James Gallardo is retiring and Ronald Mathis has been promoted to take that position. Levi Buchanan transferred from the Grounds Dept. to the Jail as a detention officer.

(n) **ECU Dental Clinic**: ECU has been evaluating a site at the Webster Complex after encountering some geo-technical problems. Hopefully the site will be a viable alternative.

(o) **Centralized Gasoline Operation**: The gasoline dispensing system at the garage will be operational by the end of the month. It will be a 24/7 key operated system and monitored by recording security cameras.

(p) **Tuckasegee Mills Bldg.**: Stanton & Stanton has removed all equipment from the building. HomTex has been authorized to use an additional 15,000 sf on a short term basis. A new long term lease will be discussed during the first part of August. Replacement of the air conditioning system in the area occupied by Sunrise Tomatoes is being evaluated. The preliminary estimate is \$150,000. Based on the current rent, it would take 7+ years to recoup that investment. Under the current lease the tenant accepted the space "as is".

(2) CONSENT AGENDA: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented three budget amendments.

Motion: Commissioner Cody moved to approve the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(3) **DILLSBORO LANDFILL**: Chad Parker, Solid Waste Director, reported five bids were received for gas and water monitoring at the Dillsboro Landfill. The gas must be tested four times per year and the water annually. He recommended the bid be awarded to the lowest bidder, Altamont Environmental, Inc., in the total amount of \$46,682.00 for a period of two years.

Motion: *Commissioner Elders moved to award a two year contract to Altamont Environmental, Inc. in the total amount of \$46,682.00. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(4) **SCATTERED SITE HOUSING GRANT ADMINISTRATOR**: Gerald Green, Planning Director, stated he solicited Request for Proposals for an administrator of the county's CDBG Scattered Site Housing Program grant funds. Proposals were received from Mountain Projects, Inc. and Grant Administrators, Inc. The county currently has two active programs funded through the CDBG program. The first with a budget of approximately \$45,000 to rehabilitate the existing home of a low income person and the second of approximately \$216,000 to demolish existing substandard housing and construct new homes for two persons previously selected by the selection committee. In addition, the county also has a program assisting with the cost of constructing an accessible home with a budget of approximately \$45,000.

The program would be managed by the planning department with the selected firm providing administrative services. Administrative services would be focused on the \$216,000 grant with assistance on the other two programs provided on an as-needed basis. The person administering the programs must be certified through the community development program. Costs for administrative services not to exceed 8% of the project costs. The proposals were evaluated using the following criteria:

- (a) experience of the staff in administering CDBG and similar grant programs;
- (b) staff knowledge of the requirements of the CDBG and related programs;
- (c) experience working in and knowledge of Jackson County; and
- (d) ability and willingness to work with the planning department.

He recommended that Grant Administrators, Inc. be awarded a contract to provide administrative services for the three current active programs.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to award an administrative services contract to Grant Administrators, Inc. for the three current active programs at a cost not to exceed 8%. Commissioner Cody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote*

Mr. Wooten requested direction on changing the purpose of the \$500,000 CDBG grant which was originally designated for scattered site housing. He asked if the Board should consider using the grant funds for rehabilitation or renovations rather than new construction. After discussion, it was the consensus that a greater impact would be to do several smaller projects rather than just a small number of house replacements. Mr. Green will present an update, concerning changing the purposes, at the August 1 meeting.

(5) CULLOWHEE SIDEWALK REQUEST: Gerald Green, Planning Director, presented a letter and map from NCDOT addressing the replacement of the bridge over the Tuckasee River on SR1002 in Cullowhee and the proposed construction of approximately 1,500 linear feet of sidewalk. The sidewalk would extend from SR1169 (Central Drive) to the south side of the bridge and from the north side of the bridge to the end of the project at a total cost of \$45,000. DOT will only consider the sidewalk upon the following conditions: (a) the county pay 20% of the cost (\$9,000.00); and (b) a government entity agreeing to maintain the sidewalk. WCU has agreed to maintain the sidewalk; however, a written commitment has not been made. Funding would not be required until the next budget year. DOT has requested a letter of commitment so it can revise and finalize construction plans.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to carry over the request. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

(6) POSITION VACANCIES: Mr. Wooten stated it is necessary that the following four vacancies be filled:

- (a) **Housekeeping Dept.**: A Housekeeper vacancy due to personnel action.
- (b) **Grounds Dept.**: A Grounds Maintenance Worker II vacancy occurred due to a transfer.
- (c) **Emergency Mgmt.**: A Telecommunicator I vacancy occurred due to a resignation.
- (d) **Recreation & Parks Dept.**: The Administrative Assistant II vacancy occurred due to a retirement.

Motion: *Commissioner Cody moved to authorize recruitment of the four positions. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote*

(7) PERSONNEL POLICY AMENDMENT: Mr. Wooten recommended that the Personnel Policies Amendments adopted on July 14, 2004 be amended as follows so that the county has more discretion and flexibility:

- Paragraph 3: change “will” to “may” and delete “annually”;
- Paragraph 4: add “If funded” at the beginning of the sentence;
- Paragraph 5: change “shall” to “may” in the first sentence, delete “the” from the second sentence;
- Paragraph 7: change “shall” to “may”;
- Paragraph 9: change “shall” to “may” in the second and third sentences;
- Paragraph 10: add “If funded” at the beginning of the sentence;
- Paragraph 11: change “shall” to “will” in the first sentence.

Motion: *Commissioner Cody moved to amend the July 14, 2004 personnel policy as recommended. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(8) ORDER OF COLLECTION (R11-13): An Order of Collection authorizes, empowers and commands collection of taxes set forth in the tax records filed with the Tax Administration and deliver receipts to the county. This Order of Collection must be considered by the Board annually so the Tax Collector can take whatever steps are necessary to collect taxes. An Order of Collection has the same effect as a court judgment against the jurisdiction's taxpayers, meaning tax collectors may use collection remedies against personal property such as attachment and garnishment and levy without additional involvement by the courts.

Motion: Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Order of Collection. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(9) BALSAM-WILLETS-OGHRE HILL FIRE DISTRICT MAP RESOLUTION (R11-14): Alan Farmer, Fire Marshal, stated that the county is required to update its fire district maps every three years. He presented a revised fire district map for Balsam-Willets-Ochre Hill VFD which reflects additional areas that were previously classified by the Dept. of Insurance as "unprotected". The fire department has approved the map. The Dept. of Insurance, Office of the State Fire Marshal, will only recognize a five-mile drivable area from the fire stations; however, Jackson County adopted a six-mile extended district.

Motion: Commissioner Cody moved to adopt the resolution revising the fire district map for Balsam-Willets-Ochre Hill VFD. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(10) OLD LIBRARY PROPERTY EXCHANGE RESOLUTION (R11-15): The resolution is for the exchange of real property with the Town of Sylva pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160A-274.

Motion: Commissioner Jones moved to adopt the resolution for an exchange of real property with the Town of Sylva. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(11) PLANNING BOARD CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR:

Motion: Commissioner Cody moved to carry over the appointments. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

INFORMAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC:

- (a) Marie Leatherwood of Sylva stated no satisfactory documentation has been provided to her concerning the \$199,000 referred to as "stockholders equity" and purportedly transferred from Jackson Dev. Corp. to the county.
- (b) Rick Morris of Shoal Creek stated barking dogs in his neighborhood has become extremely excessive. He asked if the county has a Noise Ordinance that addresses the issue. Also, there is a problem with firearms being discharged in his neighborhood which should be restricted.

PRESS CONFERENCE

CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3) Legal. Commissioner Elders 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.

There being no further business, Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Evelyn Baker, Clerk to Board

W. J. Debnam, Chairman