

**MINUTES OF A  
WORK SESSION  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on September 11, 2017, 3:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A227, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman  
Charles Elders, Vice Chair  
Boyce Deitz, Commissioner  
Mickey Luker, Commissioner  
Ron Mau, Commissioner

Don Adams, County Manager  
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney  
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

**(1) COMMISSIONER GOALS:** Mr. Adams presented the Commissioners' Goals Prioritization list. He stated this would be the ongoing list that he would attach to each work session agenda and he requested that the Commissioners review the list correctness:

**(a) Goals:**

- Administration and departmental goals.
- Land Use Plan - follow up with the plan and support departments.
- Performance evaluation for the county manager.
- Off-site meetings in different communities from time to time.
- Re-focus on the "one-stop" issue - create and develop a plan to cross-train and where to house everyone.
- Indoor pool at the Cullowhee Recreation Center - bond referendum for the public to decide.
- Capital projects and where they would be located.
- Referendum or resolution on when to put sales tax issues on a ballot.
- Combining social services and the health department.
- Affordable housing.

Mr. Adams stated that, specifically, he wanted to discuss two of the goals that day:

**(b) Pool Bond Referendum:** A timeline of the necessary steps to place a question on a ballot, would be an approximately 3-4 month process. Starting in June, 2018 would give just enough time for this to be placed on the November, 2018 ballot. If the Board was interested in proceeding with this, it would take a minimum of 3-6 months to get into a position to identify the costs and annual operating cost of a pool. They would also have to present realistic numbers to the Local Government Commission (LGC) and be granted permission from the LGC, as they regulated all of their loans.

Adding those two time frames, they were really getting to a nine month period. If they wish to move forward, he thought a decision needed to be made in the next month or two. They would need to engage an architect to program for an estimate to obtain realistic numbers.

Also, the second part would be to put together annual operating costs, although that amount would not be on the ballot. The operating cost would be needed when educating the public as it would be important to know the facility cost and the cost to operate it. When they had those numbers, they would be ready to start talking with the LGC and start getting approval to get it on a referendum.

Chairman McMahan stated that by placing the bond on the referendum, it served two purposes: (1) to allow them to use the bond structure to pay for it by financing it, if they chose to do so. (2) To gauge public support for an indoor pool facility. If it failed, then they could infer that the public did not support a public indoor pool and they may not want to move forward with it. If it passed, it would then be on the Board, at that point to say the public wanted it and would be willing to pay for it. However, that did not mean that the bond happened without a cost to the county budget as they would have to find a way to pay for the payment and operating cost. At the time, they had a five year capital plan that did not include an indoor pool payment.

Mr. Adams stated that the previous Board voted that they did not want the fund balance to go below 25%. The numbers within the five year plan anticipated dropping fund balance and stopping at the 25%. If they added a \$5-6mil project, ultimately, there would not be enough cash. They would have to come up with the cash either through additional revenues, cutting other programs or taking savings down below 25%.

Commissioner Luker stated that if it did pass, maybe it would not fit into the five year plan, but maybe it did fit into a 5-7 year plan instead.

Chairman McMahan stated that another factor to this would be where the pool would be located. Everyone assumed it would be in Cullowhee next to the recreation center, but that was a decision they would need to make. In the past it had been suggested that they do a pool in another area to give a recreation component in another community. Also, they could explore the idea of a joint effort with the hospital to provide a facility that may meet the needs.

Mr. Adams stated that the timeline he gave was based on the assumption they would be expanding at the Cullowhee Recreation Center, which was in the master plan. If they went through a process of community input about different locations, the timeline could be altered.

Commissioner Mau stated he thought they should make the decision of location before it was on the ballot, so people would know the location and he thought they should educate the public regarding possible property tax increases.

Mr. Adams stated they were limited on what wording they could include on the ballot.

Commissioner Deitz stated that his concern was doing the maintenance of the facility and how expensive it would be. He would vote to go along with this, but he thought they needed to educate people.

Chairman McMahan stated he wanted to review the master plan for Cullowhee Recreation, but did not want to close the door on possibly having the facility located in a different community.

**Consensus:** *Proceed forward with the next steps to review the Cullowhee Recreation Department Master Plan.*

(c) **Referendum Sales Tax:** Mr. Adams stated that Commissioner Mau provided a resolution regarding a sales tax referendum for review. Ms. Baker stated that she had reviewed the document and her only comment was that they did not give themselves any emergency language or any type of qualifying language for that purpose.

Commissioner Mau stated that the Board could always vote to rescind or amend the resolution.

Mr. Adams stated this was a policy decision by the Board and was not binding on future Boards. It would be a resolution by this Board making a policy statement that they prefer to have a sales tax or a bond referendum held on general elections.

**Consensus:** *Place this item on the next regular agenda for consideration.*

(3) **OTHER BUSINESS:** Commissioner Luker stated he had a few items:

(a) He wanted to add to the goals: to request a reduction in the speed limit on Old Cullowhee Road from WCU through to Dicks Gap Road.

(b) He wanted to add an item to an upcoming work session for Suzie Sinclair of the Cashiers Valley Community Council regarding the ball fields and parking lot in Cashiers.

(c) He inquired if there was a way for the Board to consider a resolution to give authorization to Tony Elders for fireworks shows so that he did not have to present and seek approval for each show.

Ms. Baker stated she would contact Tony Elders and research the item.

(d) He received calls from parents at Blue Ridge School regarding the gym and items they needed at the school. They had addressed school personnel and school personnel had referred them to the Commissioners as it would be their decision as to whether they could move forward. He responded to them that the School Board would need to approach the Board of Commissioners for anything that had to do with the schools, moving forward. He thought they needed to do a follow-up with that. He did encourage them to attend the School Board Meetings, where they had a public comment period.

Mr. Adams stated Jackson County Public Schools would be coming back to the Board of Commissioners in the next couple of months to discuss the QZAB items and they could address those items at that time. He would also follow-up with Dr. Elliott.

(e) He inquired how they declared a state of emergency and what was the procedure, process and notification to each of the Commissioners. He had people coming to him asking about the state of emergency that morning and he knew nothing about it. Some of the municipality's personnel knew it even before him as well. What was the process to make sure each of the Commissioners were aware before it was disseminated out.

Ms. Baker stated that on September 10<sup>th</sup>, the Emergency Management Director requested she help prepare the Declaration for signature for the next morning, Monday September 11<sup>th</sup>. Chairman McMahan did sign it the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>. She stated the reason the Municipalities were aware so early was that she prepared a draft Declaration for them to finalize and sign if they also wanted to declare a State of Emergency for their Municipality as recommended by Todd Dillard, Emergency Management Director. The Declaration of state of emergency stated that once declared, it should be immediately sent out to all media. It would be easy to add the Commissioners to that list as well, so that in the future, the Commissioners would see it when it was sent to the media.

Mr. Adams stated that the actual authority to call a state of emergency was with the Chairman. Generally speaking, he would rely on Mr. Dillard to make a recommendation as to whether or not a state of emergency should be declared.

Chairman McMahan stated it was a state statutory law and that it was one of the few responsibilities as Chairman that he had that did not require Board action. He had the authority, as an individual, to call for a state of emergency. He had never declared a state of emergency based on his own decision making, it had always come at the recommendation of the Emergency Management Director, as he and his team assessed the situation and decided if it was warranted. It would put them in a position to not only effectively manage the emergency situation, but also to recoup costs.

Mr. Adams stated that the document was signed that morning. It was important to get the paperwork in place because it would allow for reimbursements to occur.

(e) Commissioner Elders stated he had been approached by the VFW about possibly placing a plaque, in addition to the soldier at the historic courthouse, to recognize all who fought for freedom.

*Informational item.*

(4) **CLOSED SESSION**: *Carry over.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Luker moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

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Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman