

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
NOVEMBER 07, 2022**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on November 07, 2022, 1:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Tom Stribling, Commissioner
Gayle Woody, Commissioner

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

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) CASHIERS COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE: Stephanie Edwards, Executive Director of the Cashiers Chamber and Glenn Ubertino, President of the Cashiers Chamber, were present for this item.

Mr. Ubertino stated that all of the support received from the Board of Commissioners regarding the ULI Study and Panel was appreciated. There was a lot of momentum and good things happening. One was the Cashiers Community Collaborative. There were many groups in Cashiers with different interests. They wanted to keep the momentum and positivity from the ULI Report going.

They had several fantastic meetings and agreed to work on the ULI suggestions, along with which parties would take the lead with the different initiatives. They were going to continue down this road and he thought it would get everyone on the same page, so they could come together as one community making it easier as they moved forward on the different initiatives.

Ms. Edwards stated that the Cashiers Area Community Collaborative was intended to be an extension of the ULI, in the sense that it was focused on implementation. It was also a very inclusive and transparent process. They identified key stakeholders in the area and there was a matrix in the ULI report that was very explicit.

In the early meetings, they said that the purpose of the group was to be unified in their efforts, particularly as it related to funding for the community at large and also be coordinated. They agreed early on that the lanes would be maintained by champions in the community and would be well coordinated as they moved forward.

The group collectively agreed that land conservation was the initial priority to focus on. Later that week, they would have a presentation by the Highlands Cashiers Land Trust and hear their recommendations for a long-term conservation plan. They looked forward to working with the Board.

Mr. Ubertino stated that work was also happening with the Cashiers Planning Council in terms of the UDO rewrite. There were many positives happening and they appreciated the support from everyone, including Mr. Adams and Ms. Baker.

Chairman McMahan stated that the concept was great and he really liked the idea of the groups working together and not competing. They needed to focus their efforts together where they were supporting each other and together they would achieve great things.

Commissioner Woody stated that she appreciated that they worked to be inclusive. Kudos to them for taking the momentum and energy and moving forward.

Informational item.

(2) **QUALLA-WHITTIER PARK EQUINOX CONTRACT:** Rusty Ellis, Parks and Recreation Director, stated they were working with Equinox, a firm they had worked with several times on many parks in the county. The contract included construction documents, construction observation, topographic surveys, utility connection plans and site design documents. When the county applied for the PARTF Grant earlier in the year, they were approved for the grant, which included \$98,000 for compensation for the Equinox Contract.

Consensus: Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.

(3) **ARPA AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING:** Darlene Fox, Finance Director, was present for the next item. Mr. Adams presented:

American Rescue Plan Summary: \$8,534,441

Revenues	
First Payment 6/8/2021	\$4,267,220.50
Second Payment 6/10/2022	<u>\$4,267,220.50</u>
Total Revenues	\$8,534,441.00
Expenditures	
Public Safety and Health Wages	
Public Safety-Sheriff, Emergency Mgt.	\$4,840,009.00
Health	<u>\$3,094,432.00</u>
	\$7,934,441.00
Broadband Match	\$600,000.00
Total Expenditures	<u>\$8,534,441.00</u>
*****	*****
General fund 12	
Revenue Replacement Funds	\$7,934,441.00
Commitments to date:	
Capital Projects Fund 44	
Planning Homeless Shelter	\$62,500.00
Planning Center for Domestic Peace	\$62,500.00
Construction CDP Facility	<u>\$2,049,497.50</u>
	\$2,174,497.50
Public Safety Equipment	
Axon Equipment	\$1,210,450.90
Nonprofits	
AWAKE	\$64,711.57
Total Commitments to date:	\$3,449,659.97
Balance of Revenue Replacement Funds:	<u>\$4,484,781.03</u>

Remaining Revenue Replacement Funds:	\$4,484,781.03
Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund	\$493,794.80
Jackson County was awarded \$493,794.80	
FY22 payment of \$246,897.40 had been received	
Funding could be used for General Government Services	
No deadline until expended	
March 31st reporting was required until expended	
Total uncommitted funds:	<u>\$4,978,575.83</u>

Mr. Adams stated they were using the Revenue Replacement Process. They used existing expenditures to justify the funding. They were taking the funds and placing them into a separate accounting process to track the expenditures until the \$8,534,441 was expended.

At that time, they left the broadband match out of the conversations. There was an award made by the state, but they had not received the agreement between the county and the state for the \$300,000 match for the over \$4 million award that went to Charter. As soon as they received that information, they would bring it back to the Board for discussions.

General discussions were held.

Mr. Adams stated that the \$600,000 covered what was eligible under the GREAT Grant Program. The state was working on a second round of GREAT Grant Funding and if they were fortunate enough to be awarded in the second round, they had the funds set aside for a 7.5% match. The new CAB Program may require a 35% match from the county, which could potentially be \$1.4 million for a maximum amount, if they moved forward. There were enough funds for the CAB Program, if the Board chose to move forward.

Chairman McMahan stated they had made broadband access a priority and they had all expressed concerns about the lack of broadband access. As long as state and federal grant dollars were available, he wanted to make sure they had adequate funds set aside to match the grants. That was very important to the community.

Commissioner Woody stated that the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners made broadband the number one priority as well. The goal of the Association was “100 Counties Connected”. This was a huge task, but it could be done. They were working very hard to make sure the matches did not penalize counties and that the state funding for broadband would fill in some of those gaps.

Informational item.

(4) QUALLA-WHITTIER PARK GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE: Mr. Adams stated this project would have to be designed, go out to bid and be awarded, etc., so there were more final decisions to be made in the process. Once they started spending the funds, they were committed to the PARTF rules and had to account and budget.

He provided the proposed budget of the original PARTF grant of \$2,013,525. He noted that the Project Cost submitted to PARTF listed the total as \$1,963,525, which was \$50,000 less. When the info was sent to PARTF, \$50,000 for contingency was not added to the overall number. PARTF was aware, but since the county was over matching, it was irrelevant.

- (a) Grant Project Ordinance:
 - Total cost of project \$2,013,525
 - CPR Fund \$1,513,525
 - PARTF Fund \$ 500,000
 - Total \$2,013,525
- (b) Conservation, Preservation, Recreation Fund 28 (CPR):
 - Balance available \$1,526,315.58
 - Whittier/Qualla Park \$1,513,525.00
 - Balance as of 06-30-2023 \$ 12,787.58

Mr. Adams stated that the choices would be to fund this project from the General Fund, the CPR Fund or ARPA Fund.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(5) CASHIERS PARK PROJECT ORDINANCE: Mr. Adams stated the original Masterplan allowed for \$1.9 million. This proposal included site preparation, sidewalks, pathways, wayfinding signs, tennis courts/pickle ball, picnic tables, trash cans, benches, general planning, splash pad, architectural/engineering and contingency. The proposed project cost was \$1,111,691. This was with the understanding that they would have to design and go out to bid, which was when they would truly know the cost of the project.

At that point, the funds could come from the General Fund since they converted all of the ARPA Funds to the General Fund with Revenue Replacement. The CPR Fund would only pay for one of the projects. If the Board chose to move forward and put aside \$1,111,691 of ARPA Funds for this project, it would leave \$3,866,884.83 available for future conversations.

Chairman McMahan asked when they would expect to put these projects out to bid to get the cost estimates?

Mr. Adams stated that it would be in the next fiscal year. They would keep these amounts reserved on the radar. At a minimum, Ms. Fox would come back before the Board to place the \$98,000 and \$132,000 in a budgetary format since they would be spending those funds in the current fiscal year.

Chairman McMahan stated that if the Board decided to authorize the two Grant Project Ordinances, they were just designating those funds and putting them into reserve. The expenditure may be in at least a year.

The Board had always talked about using ARPA funds for one-time use impacts to the community that were long lasting. He thought the proposed Cashiers Park plan fit very well with the scope of conversations to impact the community. It was an outdoor recreation component that involved health, recreation and lasting impacts that improved the quality of life for the citizens in the southern end of the county. He thought there was no better way they could spend those funds and it would be something so long lasting.

Commissioner Woody stated that she totally supported that idea. They knew that outdoor activities, no matter the age of a person, greatly improved mental health. She wanted to see them designate both of the projects with ARPA money and have plaques put up stating the projects were done with Jackson County ARPA money. That would show the long lasting legacy of what this Board was able to do with the money they received from America Recovery.

Mr. Adams stated that they could take half of the funds from the CPR Fund and half from ARPA. This would also leave money in the CPR Fund.

Commissioner Jones stated that he was concerned about taking the CPR Fund down to \$12,000. He did not know if there was something on the radar with the Greenway. Maybe there was a piece of property they could acquire for the Greenway or for recreation needs. A piece of property could open up that they may want to entertain acquiring.

General discussions were held.

Chairman McMahan stated that after discussions, the consensus among the Board was to divide the funds and do a 50/50 split between the CPR Fund and ARPA Funds. Staff would bring the amended documents back to the next regular meeting.

Commissioner Jones noted that the future Webster Park may be a perfect for the CPR Fund.

Mr. Adams stated the funding for that project would be through the Council on Government. The property was owned by the school system, but controlled by the county. The \$90,000 grant would be for the pavilion, but there would be other things to be done to the property.

Chairman McMahan stated this could be another opportunity to partner to use the money in combination where it would qualify for a plaque and would provide for different areas of the community.

Commissioner Woody stated they would then have a plaque in the north, south and central parts of the county. That would show all of the community that the Board was thoughtful and inclusive.

Mr. Adams stated that he would bring the Project Ordinances to the next meeting with the costs split between ARPA and CPR Funds, which would leave over \$700,000 in the CPR Fund.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(6) BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: Mr. Adams presented a Budget Ordinance Amendment:

Public Safety Equipment	\$1,210,450.90
AWAKE	\$64,711.57
Cashiers-Glenville Recreation Project	\$1,111,691.00
Transfer to Capital Projects Fund 44	\$2,174,497.50
Designated for Future Appropriation	<u>\$3,866,884.83</u>
Total	\$8,428,235.80
Transfer from American Rescue Plan Fund	\$7,934,441.00
Local Asst & Tribal Consistency Fund - LATCF	<u>\$493,794.80</u>
Total	\$8,428,235.80

He noted the Budget Ordinance Amendment would be updated per Board discussions.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(7) HARRIS REGIONAL HOSPITAL EMS AGREEMENT AMENDMENT: Mr. Adams presented a proposed amendment to the Harris Regional Hospital EMS Agreement. The amendment memorialized the decisions made previously regarding adjustments to salaries effective July, 2021. The monthly EMS payment would be \$120,141.92.

He noted that at the end of the year, they did a shore up where if revenues were higher than expected or expenses were less, Harris Regional Hospital would pay the county back if this funded more than anticipated.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(8) NCACC LEGISLATIVE GOALS CONFERENCE: Ms. Adams stated the Legislative Goals Conference would be held November 16th-18th in Wake County.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(9) OTHER BUSINESS: None.

There being no further business, Commissioner Woody moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman