

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
APRIL 28, 2016**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Session on April 28, 2016, 1:00 p.m., Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman  
Mark Jones, Vice Chair  
Charles Elders, Commissioner  
Vicki Greene, Commissioner  
Boyce Deitz, Commissioner

Chuck Wooten, County Manager  
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board  
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **AGENDA**: Commissioner Greene moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) **INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC**: Steve Luker of Tuckasegee stated he had approximately 40 head of cattle on the H.B. Wood Heirs property. He requested that he be given more time through the summer to relocate his cattle from the property, if the transfer to Mainspring Conservation Trust went through. He had received a letter from their attorney stating he would need to pay \$1,500 to lease the property.

Chairman McMahan stated he would contact Mainspring on Mr. Luker's behalf and that he felt sure that Mainspring would work with him to allow him ample time to relocate his cattle.

Commissioner Greene requested that the Board suggest to Mainspring that they not charge a lease fee to Mr. Luker for utilization of the property for his cattle through the summer.

(3) **MAINSRING CONSERVATION TRUST GRANT**: Chairman McMahan stated that a conversation began a while back with interest in the H.B. Wood Heirs property, which is located in Canada Township. The property is uniquely located and would bridge together two Federal tracts of land. Mainspring Conservation Trust, formerly known as the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee, wanted to preserve the property and make it available to the public for public access and have the property immediately put into game land. There was a structure on the property that contained asbestos that would have to be removed.

Ultimately, the goal was to transfer the property to, most likely, the NC Wildlife Commission, that way it would stay open to the public. Commissioners did specify that they were willing to provide the grant to help purchase the property, but the stipulations were that the back county taxes owed on the property would have to be paid and that the property remain open to the public and be forever accessible to the public. The grant amount would be \$140,000 and the back tax amount, through May 31, 2016 was \$95,905.14. The scheduled closing date was May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Commissioner Greene stated that it was important to mention that the cost of the property was \$500,000 plus, of which the county was providing \$140,000, of which \$95,905.14 would be returned to the county for back taxes. Also, the property would be turned into public lands where it can be utilized for different outdoor recreation activities.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Greene moved to approve a grant to Mainspring Conservation Trust for the acquisition of the H.B. Wood Heirs property, in the amount of \$140,000, from the county's fund balance. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(4) CLOSED SESSION:**

***Motion:*** Commissioner Elders moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Chairman McMahan called the regular meeting back to order and stated no action was taken in closed session.

**(5) ANIMAL SHELTER EVALUATION, SPACE NEEDS, PROGRAM REPORT:**

Mr. Wooten presented the Executive Summary:

**(a) Purpose:** The county has recognized that the existing Animal Control Shelter needs to be evaluated for its condition and capacity to house animals. The county also needs to address current animal housing anticipated new and increasing demands for services to the community. It is necessary to determine the suitability of the current animal shelter to be renovated or expanded or whether a new shelter should be constructed. A project budget must be established and project phasing recommended if appropriate. In February, 2016, Design Learned, Inc., and Bacon Group, Inc., engineering and architecture firms, respectively, that specialize in the design of animal care facilities, were contacted and authorized to inspect visually and evaluate the condition of the county's existing shelter, to conduct a space needs analysis, to lead a programming effort to establish design parameters and to estimate a preliminary cost for a replacement shelter.

**(b) Results/Findings:** The total sheltering facilities need to be expanded if the county intends to upgrade and modernize its operations and respond to increased demand. The existing animal shelter is not a good candidate for renovation or expansion due to age and condition of the building and the limitations of the site. The existing shelter capacity, which houses 15 cats and 15 dogs, is insufficient to meet current needs. The existing dog kennel design does not meet current design standards for animal shelters especially regarding ventilation and waste removal. Adequate separation of animal populations does not currently exist. Function areas within the shelter are crowded.

At the design charette, a program for new shelters, established seven function areas:

- Lobby and public spaces
- Dog housing
- Cat housing
- Staff office and services spaces
- Receiving
- Multi-purpose room
- Spay/neuter clinic

Animal housing capacity for approximately 50 dogs/puppies and 55 cats/kittens is warranted. The conceptual floor plan developed increases the capacity for cat housing up to 76 cats. Growth and expanded programs such as more animal adoption housing and spay/neuter clinic are anticipated. The total space needs allocation required for the program areas and animal housing capacity is 17,012 square feet. Based on the county facility's location, the site, water, sewer and power utilities will be insufficient for new construction and for renovation and expansion of the existing shelter.

(c) Construction cost estimates: The conceptual opinion of probable construction cost estimates the following for construction of a new 17,000 SF animal shelter:

Building Construction	\$4,251,000 to \$5,100,000
Equipment and Caging	\$684,500 to \$1,037,000
Design Fees	\$425,000 to \$510,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,360,500 to \$6,647,000</b>

(d) Recommendations: To meet the needs as developed in the program, it is recommended that a new facility be constructed on a new site sized 2-1/2 to 5 acres. The first priority or Phase 1, is to construct a replacement shelter with all required functions including a Wellness and Spay/Neuter Clinic. The addition of a multi-purpose Community Room could be considered the next priority or Phase 2. The shelter size may be expected to be between 15,000-18,000 SF with an average cost of \$250-\$300 per SF. It is anticipated that additional staff will be required in order to care for additional animals and maintain a larger shelter.

Commissioner Greene stated that they had previously discussed “wants” and “needs” and they were most interested in “needs”. She had recently read that Haywood County’s Friends of the Animal Shelter committed to raising \$1 mil towards their animal shelter, which she thought was a good idea.

Commissioner Deitz stated they needed to decide what the real needs were for the shelter.

Chairman McMahan stated he wanted to evaluate the report and thought they needed to determine what was a realistic and appropriate size facility was needed based on the data.

Commissioner Jones stated that he had informed the Health Board that it was the Commissioners intent to have the new Health Director in place and be involved with the animal shelter and health department projects, whether it was renovation or new construction.

Commissioner Greene stated that if they continued to fund spay/neuter programs they would have better population control and may not need as much space as was stated in the report.

Mr. Wooten suggested that a joint meeting with the Commissioners and the Board of Health would be beneficial.

*Informational item only.*

**(6) CAPITAL PROJECTS:** Mr. Wooten stated that as a county, they would need to come up with an idea of what they wanted to move forward with. The Animal Shelter Report somewhat changed the capital project plan they had previously come up with. Since they were applying for the PARTF grant, they could move the Savannah Community Park project up to year one so that if the PARTF grant is approved, they could move forward with the park. Also, they had discussed the over-crowding issues at the Justice Center and moving the advanced planning for the courtrooms up on the priority list as well. He would contact Heery and Associates to see if a revised proposal was needed.

Southwestern Community College asked for two buildings next year. If they want to fund those they would have to take it out of the unreserved fund balance. The Maintenance Building would cost \$700,000 and renovations to the Summit Building would cost \$482,000. In looking at the five year plan, assuming his numbers were close, they were looking at almost \$16 mil in capital, of which they would have to come up with almost \$7 mil either through appropriations and/or borrowing. To execute this plan would require generating additional funds.

Commissioner Greene stated that as far as SCC was concerned, this would not take into account the ¼ cent sales tax, if it is passed. Those two buildings could be moved to that source of funds.

Mr. Wooten stated if the ¼ cent sales tax passed, it would be assessed beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> and first payments would be in January.

Chairman McMahan stated they may not want to wait for the ¼ cent sales tax, because those buildings were something they could accomplish and it was part of the master plan. Then, if they did get the sales tax, they could pledge that towards the Health Sciences Building, if that was the direction the Board of Directors wanted to go in.

*Informational item only.*

**(7) FY 2016-17 TAX VALUE ESTIMATES:** Mr. Wooten presented:

Real property	\$8,747,393,010
Less value held in reserve for appeals	(\$73,696,500)
New construction	-
Personal property	\$131,898,740
Public utilities - FY 2015 total	\$173,646,954
12% reduction	(\$20,837,634)
FY 2017 estimate	\$152,809,320
Motor vehicles	\$307,346,147
<b>TOTAL TAX VALUE ESTIMATE</b>	<b>\$9,265,750,717</b>

Ms. Fox stated that based on this value, they were estimating a revenue neutral tax rate to be \$0.3534.

Mr. Wooten stated they had already heard some significant requests in their discussions and depending on what they decided to do, particularly with EMS, they would have to look at additional revenues. In all likelihood, they may recommend that they at least consider an adjustment to the tax rate. One penny generates \$908,000 and the two requests they had from EMS alone were \$1.3 mil.

Chairman McMahan stated the Commissioners needed to decide what their positions were on the issue to make a decision.

*Informational item only.*

**(8) HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES – COUNTY SHARE OF FUNDING:** Mr. Wooten presented:

<b><u>Health Department</u></b>	<b><u>Budget</u></b> <b><u>7/1/13-6/30/14</u></b>	<b><u>Last Year</u></b> <b><u>Budget</u></b> <b><u>7/1/14-6/30/15</u></b>	<b><u>Current Year</u></b> <b><u>Budget</u></b> <b><u>7/1/15-6/30/16</u></b>	<b><u>Department</u></b> <b><u>Request</u></b> <b><u>7/1/16-6/30/17</u></b>
Revenues	\$2,547,440.00	\$1,846,688.84	\$2,188,645.78	\$1,935,272.00
Expenses	\$5,164,419.13	\$4,492,507.48	\$4,835,895.78	\$4,793,172.00
County Share	\$2,616,979.13	\$2,645,818.64	\$2,647,250.00	\$2,857,900.00
% County Share of Budget	50.67%	58.89%	54.74%	59.62%
% of Increase of County Share	-	1.10%	0.05%	7.96%
<b><u>Department of Social Services</u></b>				
Revenues	\$5,653,194.21	\$5,278,668.80	\$5,543,621.69	\$5,210,375.00
Expenses	\$7,619,547.62	\$7,515,939.84	\$7,510,983.82	\$7,807,096.00
County Share	\$1,966,353.41	\$2,237,271.04	\$1,967,362.13	\$2,596,721.00
% County Share of Budget	25.81%	29.77%	26.19%	33.26%
% of Increase of County Share	-	13.78%	-12.06%	31.99%

Mr. Wooten stated they would be looking at these two budgets and trying to get them as close to FY 15-16 as possible for the county share. The Health Department had requested another employee at the Animal Shelter, but he was going to request they hold the line on that item since they would be dealing with staffing with the Animal Shelter project.

*Informational item only.*

**(9) PLANNING DEPARTMENT - UDO:** Mr. Wooten stated that a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) is a local policy instrument that combines traditional zoning and subdivision regulations, along with other desired county regulations, such as design guidelines, sign regulations and floodplain and storm water management, into one document. Contracted services for the development of the unified development ordinance is \$100,000, which could be allocated over two years.

*Informational item only.*

**(10) PUBLIC WORKS – NEW POSITION, PART-TIME WAGES:** Mr. Wooten stated that Public Works submitted a request for additional positions. He would likely suggest looking at providing additional part-time wages to supplement the current staff, but not add 1 ½ more permanent positions for next year.

*Informational item only.*

**(11) SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT – TRANSFORM HEALTH:** Mr. Wooten stated this was a request from the Sheriff to go from 8 hours 7 days a week to 12 hours 7 days a week with Transform Health. They had not completed a year of the service yet and he suggested they re-evaluate after the first year to see if there is a need to add four more hours, if so, they could incorporate that into the FY17-18 budget.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Medical Services</u>	<u>Jail Doctor</u>	<u>Jail Nurse</u>	<u>Drugs</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% Inc/Dec</u>
2013-2014	\$65,286.22	\$57,000.00	\$65,793.27	\$17,850.64	\$205,930.13	
2014-2015	\$300,032.95	\$57,000.00	\$65,793.27	\$20,064.71	\$442,890.93	115.07%
2015-2016	\$202,422.60	\$14,250.00	-	13,257.06		
<i>Estimates May-June</i>						
Transform	\$34,577.30	-	-	\$1,086.06		
NC Dept of Public Safety	<u>\$7,306.00</u>	-	-	<u>\$1,616.07</u>		
	\$244,305.90	\$14,250.00	-	\$15,959.19	\$274,515.09	-38.02%

Also, the Sheriff had requested to add \$30,000 in temporary wages to be available for deputies and \$15,000 to help with gun permits.

*Informational item only.*

**(12) TAX COLLECTOR DROP BOX:** Mr. Wooten stated that Brandi Henson, Tax Collector, stated that she received questions about a way to make tax payments outside a normal business day and not have to come into the building. They would like to place a secure drop box outside the building at an approximate cost of \$1,400.

*Informational item only.*

**(13) NON-PROFIT ALLOCATIONS:** Mr. Wooten stated they had received a couple more requests:

- Cullowhee Fire Department: for the old VFW Building in Tuckasegee asking for \$10,000 to match funds they already spent to renovate the building.
- Dental Clinic: had not received any information back.
- Appalachian Women’s Museum: Commissioners would be touring the facility on May 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Habitat for Humanity: Faxed the application. Ms. Fox would follow up with them.

*Informational item only.*

(14) **LIBRARIES**: Mr. Wooten stated he thought they should fund this request, if possible. Their salary scale was substantially under what they need to be.

Chairman McMahan stated he was under the impression that all the libraries in the Fontana system were the same, but since they were not it would make more sense for the county libraries to mirror what the county employees make.

*Informational item only.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Greene moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 3:44 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

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Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman