

**MINUTES OF A PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JUNE 04, 2019**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing on June 04, 2019, at 6:00 p.m., Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman	Don Adams, County Manager
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair	Heather C. Baker, County Attorney
Mickey Luker, Commissioner (via speakerphone)	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board
Ron Mau, Commissioner	
Gayle Woody, Commissioner	

Chairman McMahan called the public hearing to order and stated the purpose was to receive public input for consideration of the proposed FY19-20 Budget. The budget would not be approved until later in June.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

(a) Mary Crisp of Cullowhee stated she was local and was one of the Board Members for HERE in Jackson County. The homeless program was important to her because she had lived homeless in the county and she was in active addiction for three years. She knew of people living in tents in the woods and in their cars. She knew it was not a visible problem for a lot of people in the area, but she wanted to bring attention to it as a real issue. She urged them to fully support the homeless program because she thought having a year-round shelter would be beneficial to a lot of people and alleviate a lot of tax dollars that were being spent on services.

(b) Monica Frizzell stated she was the Housing Specialist for Vaya Health. She worked seven counties and managed a housing grant for the region. She was also on the HERE Board of Directors because it was such a high need in the area. She wanted to have shelter in every county as it was needed, especially in Jackson. She thought HERE would be an excellent organization doing this as they were already part of a bigger organization. She hoped they funded the program.

(c) Samantha Brawley stated she was a resident of the county. She was in long-term recovery and was a Peer Support Specialist. She had previously worked at Meridian for two years and was currently working for a nonprofit. She had also been homeless herself in the county and thought having basic benefits would help people get back on their feet.

(d) Christine Bailey stated she was not associated with Jackson County, but had been working with HERE since October. She had moved to the area in August and was a professor at WCU. She thought HERE did a great job reaching out to people that were otherwise invisible in the county and region. People did think about homelessness in a rural region or think of it as a problem, which made it more dangerous than in an urban situation. HERE did a lot with a small amount of resources. She thought they could do a lot with adequate resources.

(e) Stephen Steen stated that he was in long-term recovery and was in support of HERE. In his experience, when he got to the point where he had nowhere to go, there was a lack of trust with organizations and reaching out for help. He thought HERE was striving to approach individuals from a place of compassion and understanding. He thought HERE could influence positive change in the community. He provided a letter from a person that was unable to attend the meeting.

(f) Chelsea White stated that she lived in Haywood County, but worked in Jackson County. She shared a tool called the Hierarchy of Needs, which was created by a psychologist in 1943. It demonstrated the science of the human needs in a triangle starting at the base with physiology, safety, love/belonging, esteem to the ending at the top with self-actualization. The theory was that a person had to have the bottom tier needs met before they could meet any of the needs further up. She implored the Board to consider funding for the homeless shelter with HERE.

(g) Trevor Gates stated he was soon to be a student at WCU, which was a source of revenue and jobs for the county. During points in the semester and summer break, many students had to move out of housing and then did not have sufficient housing or a place to sleep until it was time for the next semester. This was a major problem.

(h) Amy Murphy-Nugen stated that she was not a resident of the county, but did teach at WCU. She and her class had the privilege of working in a university-community partnership with HERE. Her students were tasked with doing evidence based research in support of HERE's work. She was not there representing the university, but was there as a professional practitioner with over 20 years of experience in housing and community development. She was in support of HERE and the work they were attempting to do.

(i) Lillianna Law stated that she just graduated from WCU and did her internship at Haywood Pathways Center, which was a homeless shelter in Waynesville. She had since started work there and since she had been there, she had seen so much progress in individuals there and in the community. Over 75% of the population living there were employed and many full-time. Many did end up moving out and into their own homes. It was beneficial to the community. She hoped they considered it as it was a great mission.

(j) Zach Kinsey stated he was raised in Haywood County and had struggled with addiction. He knew that homelessness and addiction were not exclusively together, but if a person dealt with addiction, they would more than likely become homeless at some point. He found recovery in Asheville simply because he had the tools he needed to become successful. He just needed resources and a push. He saw first-hand what HERE could do for people and he did not think their money would go to waste.

There being no further public comments, Commissioner Deitz moved that the public hearing be adjourned. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman