

CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Pre-meeting Work Session

MINUTES

July 20, 2010

3:00 p.m.

Cherokee Hall

At 3:05 p.m., Chairman Ahrens dispensed with his motivational reading today saying that the employees who were being presented service awards were motivation enough. Then he asked Steve McClure to begin.

1. Recognition and Presentation of Awards to Employees who have reached Service Milestones between 1/1/2010-6/30/2010 – Steven McClure-HR Director

Of the 40 people listed for the 2010 1st Quarter Service Awards, only 20 were able to be there and receive their awards in person. After Mr. McClure called their names, the recipients stood up to be recognized and received a round of enthusiastic applause from the audience. Chairman Ahrens thanked each one for their service to the citizens of the County.

2. Community Agenda Implementation – Jeff Watkins/Margaret Stallings

Jeff Watkins first gave a brief overview of the Community Agenda Implementation and then asked Margaret Stallings to present the Executive Summary contents and explain the strategy to develop an all-embracing but clear proposal in the end.

Mrs. Stallings stated that the Community Agenda reflects the citizens' long term vision for Cherokee County; the Implementation Strategies and the Short Term Work Plan within the Community Agenda describe the steps to follow to achieve this vision. One of the most critical steps is identified as a revision of the Zoning Ordinance and Development Regulations to ensure consistency with plan Vision, Guiding Principles, Policies and Character Areas in order to maximize Comprehensive Plan Implementation. The revisions to these important documents must clearly and effectively "preserve and enhance the unique character of our communities."

The Cherokee Development Code project is designed to create a concise, user-friendly set of regulations to ensure that new development is compatible with the character of the surrounding community be it rural, suburban or urban. The final document will be a combination of the Zoning Ordinance, the Development Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations. Projected completion is planned for February 28, 2011.

3. Discussion related to possible amendments to Alcoholic Beverage Ordinance to allow the on-premise consumption of beer and wine in cigar shops – Commissioner Good

Commissioner Good said that he had been contacted by a business owner in his post who had asked if the County could modify the Alcoholic Beverages Ordinance to follow the City of Cartersville and Forsyth County, in allowing beer and wine to be served in his cigar shop. Then Commissioner Good had contacted the County Attorney's office to look into the request. Ms. Kara Webb from the firm had done extensive research on the question and presented the board members with her findings via e-mail to review. After some minor changes in wording, the most recent version was put before them for evaluation. Commissioner Good said that was why he would call for a public hearing to be advertised for August 17, rather than August 3, at the meeting tonight.

4. Review of June, 2010 Financials – Janelle Funk

Mrs. Funk said that this was the first month where the financials were now simplified and easier to understand and/or read. Then she went over an Executive Summary that she had prepared to show the current financial position in five (5) pages. After a brief discussion, the Chairman said he would like to commend Mrs. Funk for the refreshing and positive changes she had made to the report. Chairman Ahrens said that he would like to go to the agenda items next and then come back to the SPLOST discussion.

5. SPLOST discussion - Chairman

Chairman Ahrens asked what besides the invitation to attend a joint meeting had the cities received; Mr. Cooper said that the cities had received a packet of information including a draft referendum as well as the project list and methodology that we use for calculating distribution. He stated that he had received Ball Ground's list and he has met with all the cities so far and discussed some joint projects and hopes to receive the other cities projects list this week.

There was considerable discussion, with Geoff Morton being asked to come up, about the road projects listed on the spreadsheets; Commissioner Bosch asked if there was a possibility of getting the Kellogg Creek Intersection on the project list, that she had been contacted by several constituents who would like to see the project done. Mr. Morton responded he would get with Mr. Cooper and see if it could be added.

The Chairman asked a question regarding the library funding and then was some dialogue about the Jail expansion and cost. Mr. Cooper said that he had trimmed some from the funding for the Senior Center expansion in particular for the satellite locations; he was moving toward combining these in the design for some of the new parks. After the Chairman pointed out that there is a line item for "Economic Development" on Mr. Cooper's list, there was some discussion on this topic as to what it entailed as far as the County was concerned.

Discussion of Regular Agenda items

Chairman asked Mr. Cooper how much time he would need to discuss the millage rate; Mr. Cooper said he would just do a very brief run-through right now of the PowerPoint presentation that the board members also have a copy of to follow along.

Mr. Cooper stated that the Cherokee Tribune had written their story about the millage rates saying that everyone's property taxes would be going up and this is not the case. He continued saying that because of the devaluation in property values, even with the increase in the millage rates, most would not see an increase in their property taxes. And the County would be able to offer the same level of service that everyone had come to expect.

After some further discussion the Chairman asked Mr. Cooper if he thought the Consent Agenda and his portion could wait until the meeting, Mr. Cooper said yes. He asked Mrs. Davis if she had much to go over in Executive Session and she answered that she did not have more than a couple of items. The Chairman said then let's go to the SPLOST discussion.

After seeing that time was getting short, the Chairman asked if there was anything else, Commissioner Bosch said that she had a topic that Commissioner Hubbard had brought up earlier that she wanted to remind everyone that the Impact Fee reduction would be up in August and she wanted to discuss a new time limitation. After she and Commissioner Johnston agreed that there should be a definite time when this program would end, with adequate notice; the Chairman said that he would much prefer to get the millage rates and SPLOST out of the way first before tackling this issue. It was then agreed that this could wait until September.

Chairman Ahrens made the motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 5:12 p.m. to discuss personnel, pending litigation and property acquisition; Commissioner Bosch seconded and the vote was 4-0 to approve.
