

**CHEROKEE COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Work Session**

**March 19, 2013**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Cherokee Hall**

**MINUTES**

The Chairman began at 3:06 p.m. with all Commissioners present. The Chairman began by mentioning that there would be a called joint meeting at 4:00 p.m. He then read excerpts from a book he received titled "776 Stupidest Things Ever Said."

**1. Cherokee Recreation and Parks Annual Report Presentation by Bryan Reynolds.**

Mr. Reynolds began by stating the Annual Report covers the FY2012 to coincide with the County's Fiscal Year. He briefly identified the pictures on the cover. Mr. Reynolds went over the organizational structure and operations of each division of CRPA. He then moved on to the staff portion of the report. In 2012, CRPA employed 25 full-time employees of whom ten of those have at least ten years of service. About 125 part-time employees work throughout the course of the year. Approximately one-third of the staff acquires relevant certifications to their job functions. Mr. Reynolds stated they achieved the budget for the FY2012 on both revenue and expenditures. They used reserves to balance last year's budget due to the shortened fiscal year and Cherokee Youth Basketball's span covered 2011 and 2012 fiscal years. The revenues were received in 2011 and the expenses were incurred in 2012. CRPA is primarily funded by three different sources: Fees and charges; beer and wine; and general fund support. Mr. Reynolds then touched on the highlights of 2012 for CRPA. February was the ground-breaking for the Aquatic Center. February 2012, Guns and Hoses raised \$3,300 for Hope and Light Foundation. Cherokee Youth Basketball's inaugural season registered over 3,000 participants and had over 800 volunteers. Also, the Silver Roamers group participated in more active trips such as zip lining and white water rafting. The Splash Pad at Cline Park finally opened last summer and had over 5,000 visits which also drove up overall participation at the park. CRPA hosted their fourth annual Lineman Challenge in which 20 schools competed. The Tennis Center participation has increased.

Volunteers from various organizations such as Eagle Scouts, Saddle Club, Garden Club, and SORBA assist the Parks Division with projects at various parks and help keep them safe and clean. Mr. Reynolds went over participation numbers. He stated there was about a 16% increase in participation over the first nine months of 2011. He added that the increases in participation closely coincided with new investments the County made in either new park construction or renovation projects in parks. Mr. Reynolds provided a list of parks with either new construction or renovations. He also gave numbers in parks which include total trail mileage, numbers of parks, and park acreage. Mr. Reynolds gave an update on the Capital Improvement Projects. Completed and active construction consists of Badger Creek Park opening; Phase I of Hobgood Park completed; construction of the Aquatic Center; and the expansion of Blankets Creek Bike Trails. Planning and Design completed entails the construction of Etowah River Park; the baseball fields at the Killian site; and the Woodstock Trails. Construction has begun for all three of these projects. Mr. Reynolds went over the "Looking Ahead" portion of the report. This includes the completion of the Aquatic Center and Blankets Creek expansion; new construction of the three aforementioned parks; and projects set to begin in the next year or so. Mr. Reynolds asked if there were any questions. Chairman Ahrens stated he wanted to acknowledge and congratulate the CRPA team on taking on new tasks and staying positive. The results show it. The Chairman commented on the Volunteer Banquet and the feeling of understanding as to what goes into it all.

The Chairman mentioned the regular work session would end at 4:00 p.m. He then announced Mr. Cooper was awarded the Lamar Haley Community Service Award by the Rotary Club. This award is given to those who have shown exemplary volunteer service.

The Chairman gave an update from the ACCG Defined Benefit Pension Board's quarterly meeting. For the calendar year of 2012, there was a 12.6% increase in the portfolio. Three-year is 9.23%; and since inception in 1990 has had an average annual rate of return of 8%. As of March 4<sup>th</sup>, there has already been a 5% increase in the first two months. So, pension investments are strong.

## **2. Discussion of Regular Agenda Items.**

Chairman Ahrens went over the **Chairman's** portion:

- A. There is a vacancy on the Highland Rivers Community Service Board in which the County has two positions. The Chairman introduced CEO of Highland Rivers, Mr. Jason Bearden who stated that Highland Rivers Health is a non-profit Community Service Board that serves 12 counties in northwest Georgia, with Cherokee being the largest. They advocate and bring better services to the County. The three distinct populations served are those with serious persistent mental illness such as schizophrenia and bi-polar; those with addictive disease/substance abuse; and

those with development disabilities. Direct benefits to the County at the local level are jail diversion and court system diversion with early prevention and treatment. Mr. Bearden stated the Board is looking for an individual with a strong financial bent and someone who understands children and families as they want to bring more child and family-based services to Cherokee County in the next six months. The Chairman asked Mr. Bearden about the Board's funding source. Mr. Bearden responded that they are a \$36M company and half of the funding is from a contract with the State. The other half comes from Medicare, Medicaid, and now Veterans. Commissioner Johnston asked how one would obtain their services and what if they didn't have money to pay for services. Mr. Bearden stated historically there are three ways an individual receive their services: crisis access line, emergency room, and the Probate judge. People can sign up for services via their website, call the office for an appointment or show up at the office if in crisis. Mr. Bearden stated that there is a sliding scale fee matrix for low-income individuals and graduates up based on income. The funding from the state is specifically for individuals who do not have insurance or a payer source. Commissioner Johnston confirmed this vacant board position is voluntary.

Mr. Jeff Watkins went over a **Zoning Case**:

Commissioner Johnston stated that he had spoken with the applicant and he is now willing to accept O&I. The applicant is asking if he has the option of revising the application and having it re-heard. Mr. Watkins stated it is up to the Board in how they want to handle the case. Commissioner Johnston added he didn't recall an applicant being able to amend their application then re-submit it for a new hearing. He said an option for this applicant would be to postpone the decision but he doesn't want to make it an open door for other applicants who are denied to re-submit their applications. The Chairman added the other option would be for the applicant to withdraw then re-apply. Ms. Davis interjected stating the concept of amending the application is distinct from the concept of just approving the application of O&I. She added she didn't think the Board would want to do that absent of the applicant coming forward and agreeing to it. She thinks if the applicant comes forward and the Board approves it, that's fine. Ms. Davis said a legal option is they could remand it back to the Planning Commission for them to re-hear and allow him to amend the application. She stated the Board could approve O&I during the regular meeting if they are comfortable with that decision. Commissioner Johnston commented he was not prepared to approve anything based on the 9-0 denial recommendation by the Planning Committee.

Chairman Ahrens went over another item under **Chairman's** portion:

The Chairman stated that he received a letter on behalf of the Scott Hudgens Family Foundation, advising the Board that they wanted to donate 399.5 acres to the County. He said that Scott Hudgens had donated the property for the veteran's cemetery. The

Chairman read a portion of the letter from the foundation to the County. He added there are no conditions mentioned in the letter. The Chairman commented he learned a good bit about Mr. Hudgens. He had owned property where Laurel Canyon and Riverstone now sit. Ms. Davis interjected stating that the one thing she recommends, depending on what the County intends to do with it, is to be clear in any transfer as to whether we intend it for active or passive greenspace in case a question were to come up later. Commissioner Johnston commented he thinks it's a wonderful asset for the County. He added that the fact that it adjoins the horse park makes the most obvious choice to expand the trails and add an entrance at Highway 140. The Chairman said that perhaps we could accept in principal subject to verification with the donor.

Mr. Cooper went over items under the **County Manager's** portion:

Mr. Cooper stated that the items tonight are mostly bids received on various proposals that range from surveying to environmental.

The Chairman briefly mentioned there is a Board appointed vacancy on the Board of Ethics upon the resignation of Mr. Jeff Duncan.

The Chairman asked Parks and Recreation Director Bryan Reynolds about the incentive to offer employee discounts for use of County parks and facilities. Mr. Reynolds replied that the resolution proposes discounts for employees in three areas: boat ramp passes, facility rentals and the Aquatic Center.

The Chairman mentioned that Commissioner Poole had a Town Hall meeting coming up.

The Chairman shared the results of the Holly Springs City Council meeting related to two items effecting unincorporated Cherokee County. The first item was the annexation of a parcel at Marble Quarry Road which was approved by the City Council. The existing County zoning is O&I and the applicant requested General Commercial. The City Council approved Neighborhood Commercial. The other item was two votes on the agenda regarding the WellStar purchase of 60 acres at Sixes Road and I-575 / Gresham Mill Parkway. The request to rezone from General Commercial and Mixed Use under Holly Springs Ordinance to General Commercial was approved. The request for the conditional use permit was denied 4-0 with one abstention. This means basically no hospital and no free-standing Emergency Room can be built. He added that although the Council didn't read the conditions, he later found out that the existing conditions on that property would transfer to the General Commercial Conditions.

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## **Adjourn**

Vice-Chairman Nelms made a motion to close the Work Session at 4:02 p.m. to open the joint meeting with the Resource Recovery Development Authority. Commissioner Gunnin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Work Session reconvened after RRDA Executive Session at 5:25 p.m. Vice-Chairman Nelms made a motion to adjourn the Work Session at 5:30 p.m.; Commissioner Johnston seconded and there was unanimous approval.

Executive Session Followed.