

CHEROKEE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session

July 16, 2013

3:00 p.m.

Cherokee Hall

MINUTES

The Chairman began at 3:03 p.m. with all Commissioners present.

1. Recognition of employees who have reached service milestones of 10, 15, 20, and 25 years by Steve McClure.

Mr. McClure read the list of names of the individuals to be recognized for their years of service to the County. There were 56 employees for 10 years of service; 24 for 15 years of service, six for 20 years of service; and two for 25 years of service. The Chairman and Board thanked the employees for their service.

2. Proposed 2013 Millage Rates Presentation by Janelle Funk.

Ms. Funk began by reiterating the process for setting the millage rate. She reminded the Board they are only considering adopting the millage rate at that time and not the FY2014 Budget. She said the budget would be presented to the Board and to the public in September. Ms. Funk gave a brief summary of each of the three options. She recalled the Board's selection of option 2 which is to operate within the rollback millage rate. She shared that the General Fund, Fire Fund, and Parks Bond would result in a decrease in the millage rate. Ms. Funk went on to say that as of July 12, 2013, the tax digest had increased 2.55%.

The Chairman shared a comparison to 2008 rates, pointing out that the County has absorbed what is basically inflation in adopting these rates. Commissioner Johnston clarified with Ms. Funk that in considering the upcoming Budget that the County is still looking at a COLA of up to 3%. Ms. Funk replied that the budget has a target of 3% COLA. He then asked Ms. Funk in regards to an item on tonight's agenda if there was

anything that would keep us from proceeding with the 10% reduction in employee health insurance costs. He said that he understands that reduction would come from reserves that were built out of that fund. Ms. Funk replied that she didn't think that the 10% reduction in health costs would have any impact on operation costs for fiscal year 2014.

Discussion on options relating to moving forward on the Etowah Community Development Standards.

The Chairman stated that the Board had before them some documents prepared by Mr. Watkins' staff including the summary of conditions, status and comparison of dimension standards. The Chairman added that they had received a request from the owners to postpone the public hearing for the second Board meeting date in August which is August 20, 2013. Mr. Jeff Watkins summarized the content of the conditions presented to the Board for the Etowah Community and gave a status on where they are in the process. Commissioner Nelms asked Mr. Watkins about the minimum required square footage of lots for single-family homes. Mr. Watkins stated the exterior lots will be 18,000 square feet and interior lots will be 12,000 square feet. Commissioner Johnston added that he does not oppose the notion of some flexibility for the senior residential detached community. Mr. Watkins said that he'd check into getting the advertisement in for the new date of the Public Hearing.

3. Discussion of Regular Agenda Items

Public Hearing portion:

- Consider changes to the Impact Fee Ordinance of Cherokee County, Georgia, Chapter 32, Article II to modify the fees charged in the Impact Fee Schedule. The public is invited to attend.

Mr. Watkins went over the details of the proposed changes to the Impact Fee Schedule.

- Consider a petition by Acworth Highway 92 Partners, LLC, to modify conditions of zoning, Case # 05-05-030, Majestic Hwy. 92 Partners, LLC.

Ms. Vicki Taylor-Lee briefly went over the conditions. The condition is for Condition Four (4), requesting additional building materials to be made available. The next is Condition Six (6) and the request is for additional available materials and an addition of a 50 foot pylon sign adjacent to I-75. The last is Condition Eight (8), requesting removal of the limit of four parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of building. Discussion ensued regarding the details of the requested modifications.

Chairman Ahrens asked Mr. Galloway, the representative for Acworth Highway 92 Partners, if the name of the business was public yet. Mr. Galloway replied that it was not. Mr. Galloway went over the different types of building materials and other details of the requested modifications.

Mr. Cooper went over items under the **Consent Agenda**:

- Consideration to designate no U-Turns and install "No U-Turn" signs at the intersection of Eagle Drive and West Putnam Ferry Road.
- Consider approval of proposal from Jive Communications to provide Voice over IP Telephone Service at the South Annex Recreation Center.
- Consider approval of Professional Services Agreement with Fire Fox EVS, LLC, in the amount of \$7,730.00 per year to provide the required annual testing of Ground Ladders and Pump Service. The second of two bids received was from Fire One in the amount of \$18,875 per year.

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

- Adopt 2013 Millage Rates for General Fund, Fire District, and Parks Bond (Debt Service).
- Consider approval of contract with CW Matthews Contracting Company, Inc., for construction of the Towne Lake Parkway and Rose Creek Drive resurfacing project in the amount of \$1,901,794.60.
- Consider approval of construction contract to the lowest responsible bidder, Georgia Development Partners, LLC, in the amount of \$1,287,396.77 for projects at Barnett, Dwight Terry, Sequoyah and Weatherby parks. A contingency amount of \$103,400.00 is also requested.
- Consider acceptance of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development CDBG Funding Approval/Agreement in the amount of \$975,232.00.
- Consideration of Benefits Committee recommendation to reduce employee health insurance premium costs 10% for FY2014 at an estimated cost of \$275,000 to be paid with Insurance and Benefit Fund reserves which currently totals \$1.3 million. It is estimated that reserves will total \$1.8 million on October 1, 2013.

Mr. Cooper commented that at one time, 18% in reserves was a good number, but he would be meeting with Scott Parker to discuss what an ideal reserve is now. He added that the \$275,000 premium reduction would only drop the reserves to 17% for 2014. He said it seems fair to give back to the employees who have absorbed a lot over the last couple of years. Commissioner Nelms agreed that this reduction in combination with the 3% COLA would go a long way with employees. Mr. Cooper commented that very briefly

they had discussed a fixed versus COLA increase, but seeing the numbers today compared to where they were even a few months ago, they felt comfortable with a 3% COLA. He said that they were hopeful that the County will continue to save and will continue to be able to reduce costs to employs and eventually tax payers.

- Consideration of Benefits Committee recommendation to select Conexis as the new Flex Benefits provider.

Mr. Cooper explained that selecting Conexis for Flex Benefits and Cobra would actually be a reduction in cost.

- Resolution concerning Cherokee Water and Sewerage Authority (CCWSA) sharing costs of Metro North Georgia Water Planning District's fees.

Discussion ensued regarding CCWSA's request of being the alternate to the governing body of Planning District.

Mr. Cooper said that in sitting down with Tom Heard with CCWSA, the idea of splitting the fees 50/50 was discussed. CCWSA requested to be the alternate to the governing body of the planning district. By law the seat goes to the Chairman but he can designate an alternate. He said that they have a great relationship with CCWSA and he thinks it would be appropriate to approve the recommendation to get the 50% paid and to give them the seat.

The Chairman added that they effectively do that now, but this would be by agreement. They have also suggested that we jointly ask the cities to pay something. He added that the reason for the huge increase is that every four or five years the district plan has to be updated. Once the plan update is completed it will go back down.

The Chairman mentioned to Angie Davis by way of conversation the annexation notice of some property in the Woodstock area. Ms. Davis stated they had questioned whether the land was contiguous because the way it sits looks as though it is Corps of Engineers' property. She also feels there could be some land use objections. She proposed that the County confirm on the legality issue of appropriate contiguity and, if it's not, put the City of Woodstock on notice with the hopes they will acknowledge, agree, and withdraw the request. If they do not, the County will need to put them on formal notice and bring up the land use objection as a caution. Mr. Watkins stated they are in communication with the City and working on the issues mentioned. Ms. Davis added the deadline for filing land use objections is August 9, 2013. Commissioner Gunnin mentioned one issue with a small portion of the property outside the fire station in which the land owners have allowed the station to use the immediately outside area for parking and if annexed, that will need to be worked out.

The Chairman asked if there was anything else, hearing none, Commissioner Nelms moved to adjourn the Work Session at 4:14 p.m. Commissioner Poole seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Special Joint BOC/RRDA Session followed.