

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

**Work Session**

**August 20, 2013**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Cherokee Hall**

**MINUTES**

The Chairman began at 3:02 p.m. with all Commissioners present. Note: Angie Davis was running late at the start of the meeting. Note: Ms. Davis arrived at 3:10 p.m.

**1. Discussion on 2012 Digest Ratio Study by John Adams.**

Mr. Adams began by stating that the Department of Audits (D.O.A.) with the State conducts a study of all counties each year by comparing the sales within that county to the values that are on the digest to be sure each county follows the market appropriately. The County conducts a similar study to help determine what needs adjusting to bring the values to market. In 2010, SB 346 was introduced and became effective for tax year 2011. Mr. Adams went over what was included in the bill and its effect on market values as well as how the ratios are calculated. He added that the ideal ratio should be around 40%. If a County falls below 38% ratio then the values of all public utilities must be adjusted to that lower level. The current D.O.A. ratio study indicates a ratio of 36.87%. This would result in a loss of revenue to the County of approximately \$122,000 and approximately \$250,000 to the School District. He stated the D.O.A. now does what is called a "look forward" where they take January 1 values for 2012 and look at the sales that occurred in 2012 only and compare that. Around July 2012, Cherokee County's market went from a downturn to an upswing which makes this method invalid and gives inaccurate results. Internal ratio studies using all the 2011 sales to establish the 2012 values indicate a ratio greater than 38%. This is the method that has always been used by the Counties and the Department of Audits in the past. Mr. Adams stated he does not know what the final value on the utilities will be as the State will not provide those numbers until late October or early November. Discussion ensued over the State's decision to use sales beyond January 1 and its effect on the

digest. Mr. Adams indicated the ratio study is currently under appeal by the School Board and it would be the Commissioner's decision to also file an appeal or not. After much discussion with the D.O.A. this week, a new study is being performed eliminating the latter portion of the 2012 sales which will improve the overall results. A hearing will be held Wednesday, September 4, to discuss the results of this new study. If not satisfied with this study it can be appealed to Arbitration.

## **2. Discussion on Capital Improvement Element (CIE) and Annual Impact Fee Report by Margaret Stallings.**

Ms. Stallings began by making a correction to the annual report at the Summary table. She stated the amount of impact fees collected for 2012 was significantly higher than what was collected in 2011. Ms. Stallings mentioned their changes in total amount collected over the last several years. The amount collected for 2012 includes seven months when the collection was at 50% and five months at 100%. All dates fall on August 1. Commissioner Johnston asked if the County was committed to spending the balances within a certain time frame and if we are in danger of losing them if not. Ms. Stallings stated that they have encumbered them over time because if they don't encumber within six years they lose them. Ms. Stallings introduced Mr. Bill Ross to go over the CIE and Methodology Report.

Mr. Ross reminded everyone that the CIE is drawn from the Methodology Report. However, the most important factor not in the CIE is the actual fee calculations. He added that in about two months the Board will be able to adopt both documents once hearing back from the State. Mr. Ross briefly went over the Methodology Report. Mr. Ross mentioned the Public Hearing on the CIE draft to be held that evening. He stated that the Board would need to discuss future Impact Fees and what changes in fees, if any, would need to be made as well as any changes to the CIE. They should be in a position to adopt the fees by the October 15 meeting. However, they would need to adopt the CIE prior to adopting the Impact Fee schedule.

## **3. Review Etowah Community Options.**

Mr. Watkins began by recalling an email sent out with details of the Etowah Community lots. He stated they have a resolution prepared including conditions to be met for the project. The Chairman expressed a need for a swing category to be flexible in the 15-year planning time frame of the project to be able to change according to trends in the market and would need a range of build out. Commissioner Johnston presented possibilities of housing types and lot sizes and the breakdown of each including a newly introduced product and how they would fit into varying lifestyles. The Chairman asked if they had sent notice of the September 3 Public Hearing. Mr. Watkins confirmed that they

had and everything is ready to go. The Chairman asked what information would be available for citizens to review. Mr. Watkins listed the items as the original application and the amended conditions. Commissioner Nelms asked if the timeline is being pushed from the developer. Mr. Watkins said that was not the case. Commissioner Nelms asked Mr. Patrick Clark the timeline of events from the developer's side. Mr. Clark stated that the full process to get started can take up to 24 months. Mr. Watkins passed out a draft of the resolution. Commissioner Nelms asked if the number of entrances had been agreed upon with the landowner. Mr. Watkins stated there would be two with a third option. Commissioner Nelms asked about wetlands mitigation permits for streamside buffers and if that would fall under the two-year plan. Mr. Clark responded that it would be. Discussion ensued regarding lot layout around the perimeter of the property. The Chairman addressed category issues and discussion continued on targeted age groups. The Chairman mentioned having a sit-down meeting with Commissioner Johnston, Mr. Watkins, and Mr. Clark to work out all the details.

The Chairman mentioned an email sent out for two proposed RRDA candidates and would like to vote on that in the Regular Meeting.

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

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

- Approval to set a Public Hearing for September 17, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. to solicit public feedback regarding the FY2014 Budget.

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

- Consider approval of sale agreement with Westbridge Partners for \$1,800,000.00, plus reimbursement for removal of façade of approximately \$200,000.00 for the former Jones Building.
- Award the County's standard Construction Agreement with the most responsive, responsible proposer, Headley Construction, in the amount of \$179,000.00 for the Removal of the Metal and Stucco Veneer from the Jones Building. Additional requests include a construction contingency in the amount of \$21,000.00 and interior abatement allowance in the amount of \$25,000.00 for a total requested amount of \$225,000.00.

The Chairman asked if there had been any feedback from the City of Canton. Mr. Cooper said he met with the Mayor, Scott Wood, and the Downtown Development Authority members the previous week and they are excited to move forward with the project. Commissioner Johnston asked about the earnest money and if any would be refundable if they were unable to obtain the nomination for a national historical register. Mr. Cooper stated that \$35,000 of the earnest money would be refundable.

Mr. Cooper gave an estimated timeline on the façade removal and possible parking issues. He stated the County Extension Office will be moving to the Bluffs. The former Business Center will become a central meeting room.

- Approval of agreement to Discontinue Services set forth by the Professional Services Agreement dated September 3, 2010, between Cherokee County and HDR Engineering, Inc. for the East Park Project.
- Consider approval of Professional Services Contract with AMEC Environment & Infrastructure, Inc., for completing design revisions and updates to the SR 140 and East Cherokee Drive intersection improvement project in the amount of \$60,810.00.
- Approval to award Professional Services Agreement to lowest, responsive bidder, Spectrum Floor Designs, in the amount of \$23,679.49 for the E- 911 flooring and authorize County Manager to sign the PSA on behalf of the Board.
- Consideration of Names for the Baseball Complex and Fields at the Killian Property.
- Consider amending Cherokee Soccer Association agreement to allow additional field lighting at Badger Creek.
- Consider changing definition of Local Recreation Provider in Athletic Field Use Policy to include a minimum size of 60 players or 5 teams, whichever is less.
- Consider 10-month lease with two, one-year (12-month) extensions with the State Properties Commission for use by Juvenile Justice for lease rate of 4,526.25 per month for 3,621 square feet of office space located adjacent to the Department of Driver Services.
- Consider acceptance of bid from Dewell Day for property owned by the County located near Bishop Road totaling 1,810 square feet for bid amount of \$1,000.
- Consider renewal of Fire Services Agreement between Cherokee County and the City of Holly Springs for a period of five (5) years.
- Consider Intergovernmental Agreement to conduct elections in Waleska and Mountain Park.
- Consider approval of Revised Grant Fiscal Management Policy which formalizes the procedures to ensure that the County is in compliance with OMB A-87 Attachment B.

The Chairman asked if there was anything else, hearing none, Commissioner Nelms moved to adjourn the Work Session at 5:12 p.m. Commissioner Poole seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session followed.