



# Cherokee County Board of Commissioners WORK SESSION MINUTES

**January 21, 2014**  
**3:00 p.m. | Cherokee Hall**

The Chairman began at 3:09.m. with all Commissioners present.

1. Discussion on Voter Precinct Changes Delayed by Janet Munda.

Ms. Janet Munda began by recalling a previous discussion regarding a proposed plan to reduce the number of precincts in the County from 42 to 28. She indicated a lot has transpired since that date the Board of Elections adopted the plan on October 28, 2013. Because of special elections, a run-off, qualifying coming in March, primaries coming in May, and a new voter registration system implemented by the State, the time frame is really close. Ms. Munda announced that the precinct reduction will be delayed until 2015.

The Chairman stated it seems unusual to have a special election and run-off just for that candidate to serve only a month and a half and then turn around and run again in the upcoming primaries. He asked if there was any legislation regarding a short time frame in an election year. Ms. Munda said there is not and that it's just to fill the unexpired term.

The Chairman confirmed with Ms. Munda that those seeking to run in the upcoming election would need to turn in their campaign disclosure reports through the elections office by January 31, 2014. Ms. Munda commented that this deadline covers all elected officials. Their IT person is working to implement an online fillable form. Commissioner Johnston confirmed that it was a form that they would type in the information then print it out to turn it in. Commissioner Nelms asked if the disclosure report could be turned in earlier than January 31<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Munda said it could. She added that the Ethics Commission put out a new updated financial disclosure report on January 5, 2014. These are due no later than June 30, 2014.

2. Discussion of Regular Agenda Items.

**CHAIRMAN**

**L. B. AHRENS**

A. ACCG Launches Centennial Celebration.

The Chairman stated that the ACCG is celebrating its centennial year and is making it a year-long recognition. Their big event will be during their annual meeting in Savannah in April. The Chairman mentioned he will send out some information to the Commissioners pertaining to the event. ACCG asked all counties to consider a resolution recognizing the celebration. He proposed looking at the model that was sent at the next scheduled meeting.

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

- 1.1 Consider acceptance of Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) supplemental subgrant award for Family Counseling for the Drug Accountability Court and budget amendment in the amount of \$9,600.00. There is no match required.
- 1.2 Consider approval to surplus various outdated electronic equipment from Cherokee Recreation and Parks Agency at the next Electronics Recycling Day.
- 1.3 Consider approval to apply for the 2013 Sex Offender Registry Notification Act (SORNA) Technology Grant for the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office in the amount of \$27,716.00. This is a no match grant.

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

- 2.1 Consider awarding Professional Services Agreement to low bidder, 144<sup>th</sup> Marketing Group, LLC, for the purchase and installation of specified Law Enforcement equipment in the amount not to exceed of \$10,512.00 per vehicle. (Contract value not to exceed \$210,240.00.)
- 2.2 Consider first amendment to partnership agreement with Northside Hospital-Cherokee to add payment to Cherokee County in the amount of \$125,000.00 made in annual installments of \$25,000.00 for Parks and Recreation, including the Aquatic Center.

Commissioner Johnston confirmed it would give them rights to put up banners and such. Mr. Cooper stated they would have banners inside and signage that will

allow other sponsor names to be added and will face the outdoor pool. They also have several signs out at various ball fields throughout the County.

- 2.3 Consider approval of Professional Services Agreement with American Engineers, Inc., for completing revised traffic study for the East Cherokee Drive and Old Hwy. 5 and the East Cherokee Drive and Mill Creek Road intersection improvement projects in the amount of \$9,500.00.
  - 2.4 Consider approval of the sale of shoot house to the State of Georgia for \$700,000.00.
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Ms. Davis went over the item under the **County Attorney** portion:

- 3.1 Resolution to adopt 2014 Qualifying Fees.

Ms. Davis stated the resolution is for the qualifying fees that need to be adopted for the 2014 election season. The information was prepared by Mr. Steve McClure and Ms. Janet Munda. If it meets with the Boards approval, it would need to be adopted at the Regular Meeting.

The Chairman mentioned minutes from the retreat at Barnsley Gardens were being prepared and will be available for distribution and approval by the next meeting. He added the Ledger News and Cherokee Tribune were there both days. The Chairman began to go over highlights from the retreat.

The Chairman said they started by looking back at 2013 at what they did and did not achieve. They spent time discussing parks overall and where we are and should we pull forward some of the funding they had not intended originally from the Parks Bond. Commissioner Johnston added that Patriot's Park is about ready to start. Mr. Echols interjected they will be having a meeting with the designer for the park, Smith Planning Group, to catch back up to see where we are. Commissioner Johnston stated it would depend on the impact on the tax rate. Commissioner Nelms said another thing they discussed was placing undue burden on the staff as well as the return on investment of the Parks Bond for the taxpayers. He said the question would be about keeping the bond rate under .75. Mr. Echols added the point of their meeting would be to get an updated cost

estimate. About a year ago they provide us a cost estimate that was within budget. Depending on what they want to do with East Park they may put some up-front money for the redesign and restart of the park. The Chairman brought up a question previously asked by Commissioner Gunnin about practice fields for senior league softball. He said they began to look at property the County currently owns that with a little work could serve as practice fields. Commissioner Johnston referred to the currently named Veteran's Park that could be considered "mow it and play it" because it's so flat, although access is a big limitation. He believes it is large enough to accommodate at least ten fields. He added that Mr. Bryan Reynolds suggested at least a conceptual plan for the park be prepared so that if a road is made, they can place it in the appropriate place. Commissioner Johnston also mentioned the future Birch Park land they have already committed to put a road in. He added that there would be a need for parking and pedestrian access to the fields. Commissioner Nelms referred to his relationship with the athletic community in the County and that people he interacts with at speaking engagements are ready to see the return on the Parks Bond investment. He added there are many special needs children in the County who could benefit from the planned Miracle League field. Mr. Reynolds stated the special needs community could certainly benefit from having their own designated field. He went on to explain there is a special design specific to special needs and people with cleats would not be allowed on that field. Commissioner Poole referenced Mr. Robert Strozier who serves on the Recreation Advisory Board and his push for a special needs field. He added it will be nice for them to have a field to call their own. Commissioner Johnston suggested the concept needs to be refined. He added that what they got out of the discussion was to evaluate the financial implications of accelerating Patriot's and getting it built as soon as possible and evaluate the pros and cons of concepts involved in opening up Birch Park and/or Veteran's Park property at an earlier point for practice quality fields and addressing accessibility.

The Chairman stated they had financial-related discussions. Looking at the long-term plan, there is some predictability in the economy, more so than the last few years. They also are looking into getting an update on the residential and commercial tax digest. The Chairman said that as we get more commercial businesses, to track that would be interesting to see what's happening. The Chairman stated that the Board also had an open-ended discussion on impact fees with no conclusion but a direction of a non-financial image in competitiveness consideration. He added that it extends into Water and Sewerage as well. We are headed on a track of upward opportunities and that we know where we are competitively.

The Chairman moved on to the discussion regarding the Historic Preservation Ordinance, stating that they came to a conclusion to move forward. He indicated a

draft will be ready for the next meeting. Commissioner Johnston added that they discussed it and he could give Mr. Watkins a little background of their discussion. Commissioner Nelms asked Mr. Watkins if the draft of the ordinance was close to verbatim of the State ordinance. Mr. Watkins stated that most of the layout and the language follow the State but that he chose phrasing and policy from various county ordinances being mindful of the property owners and giving them rights and options. Commissioner Nelms asked if the ordinance is geared toward a model of both commercial and residential or more toward commercial structures. Mr. Watkins replied that a majority of the funding by way of grants and outside sources tends to lean toward income-producing properties so the County's draft of the ordinance bends more in that direction. He added there are only about 21 properties the ordinance will apply to if they choose to adopt that particular list. They are also seeking to offer lessened or waived impact fees for saving that historic property. Commissioner Johnston mentioned that they had noticed the ordinance did not provide restriction to only commercial type properties but could apply to any kind of property. However, they would not necessarily be inclined to do so. Mr. Watkins stated he was thinking the Board would adopt the ordinance then amend it to add the list of 21 properties previously discussed. Commissioner Johnston recalled a question they had regarding the changing of the exterior of an historic structure in that there was not a six-month waiting period to re-apply in the event of a permit denial. He asked if that was intentional. Mr. Watkins explained the process and said if the application is denied, they could go before the Board of Commissioners for an appeal. Commissioner Nelms asked Mr. Watkins his thoughts about historical districts. Mr. Watkins stated he could only think of a handful such as Lathemtown or Union Hill that would qualify.

The Chairman mentioned that they met with the Canton City Council for a few hours and discussed several topics including economic development and fire districts. He felt it was a positive discussion. Commissioner Johnston stated they discussed the possibility of consolidating fire. Both sides had some to agree while others had reservations about it. It was suggested by a council member to deal with the most urgent situation first which is to work on a new station to replace Station 9 in North Canton. It will serve the Great Sky and Laurel Canyon areas of the city. They tasked Mr. Cooper and acting City Manager, Glenn Cummings, to come up with a framework on how that might work on a detailed basis. It will most likely be funded and built by both the City of Canton and the County. Commissioner Johnston feels it will be a great plan to move forward if they can get the details to work. The Chairman stated they also discussed other topics such as managing the parks. Commissioner Johnston added the City would like for the County Parks and Recreation to take over the scheduling of the fields for league play. Commissioner Nelms indicated that the City would continue to maintain the fields.

The Chairman suggested amending the agenda for the Regular Meeting to accept Mr. Troy Welker's resignation from the RRDA Board. A brief discussion ensued regarding keeping the RRDA Board fully staffed and filling the vacancy as quickly as possible.

### **Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Commissioner Johnston made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 4:14 p.m. to discuss personnel, land acquisition or disposal, and pending or threatened litigation; Commissioner Nelms seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.