

MITCHELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES

REGULAR SESSION

JANUARY 6, 2014

NORTH CAROLINA

MITCHELL COUNTY

The Mitchell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on January 6, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's Conference Room, Administration Building, Bakersville, NC. Those present for the meeting were: Bill Slagle, Chairman; Joe Street, Vice-Chairman; Keith Holtsclaw, Member; Ken Hollifield, Member; Charles Vines, County Manager and Kathy Young, Clerk to the Board. Commissioner McKinney was absent from the meeting. Also present were: Andy Mendhenk, Reporter with the Mitchell-News Journal.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Commissioner Slagle called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. **INVOCATION** – County Manager Vines gave the invocation.
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Commissioner Holtsclaw led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **ETHICS AWARENESS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST REMINDER:**
In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every Board member to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearance of conflict. Does any board member have any known conflicts of interest or appearances of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the Board? If so, please identify the conflict or appearance of conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the particular matter involved.
5. **ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA** – None
6. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Commissioner Hollifield moved to adopt the Agenda. Commissioner Street seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
7. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Commissioner Street moved to approve the Minutes for December 2, 2013. Commissioner Holtsclaw seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
8. **PUBLIC COMMENTS/BOARD COMMENTS** – None.
9. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**
 - A. **Greenways Plan** – Commissioner Street updated the Board on the Greenway Plan. Commissioner Street moved for Mitchell County to be the applicant for PARTF

Grant in the amount of \$106,800. Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Chairman Slagle informed the Board that they would be having a Special Meeting on January 21, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. to hold a public hearing on the PARTF Grant application.

B. Broadband Update – Dean Russell, Project Manager with Country Cablevision provided the Board with the following update:

Work Progress for Mitchell County

- One million dollars received January 3, 2014
- Work will start this week in the Beans Creek area
- Work continues in downtown Bakersville
- The Roan Mountain area is nearly complete
- Mainline Fiber is being run across the river
- Duke Energy is working on permits at this time
- Areas where French Broad is will be completed first

Mitchell County will have 36.5 miles of Support Strand Cable and 19.1 miles of Fiber when the project is completed.

USDA – FUS Funding

- 25.3 million in grants and loans

Money Spent to Date

- \$10.22 million

Mitchell County Money

- \$8 to \$10 million dollars

To date 350% has been spent on pole make ready issues in Spruce Pine with Duke Energy than has been spent on all of Yancey County combined with French Broad Electric.

Build Out

- Areas in the order they will come on line
Burnsville Bakersville Spruce Pine

Work Completed To Date

- Yancey County 75% Complete
- Mitchell County 15% Complete

The project must be completed by early 2015.

High Speed Internet

- 3 Mgps
- 50 Mgps
- 100 Mgps

Currently Glen Raven Factory in Burnsville is a test site for this project. They have been testing it for over forty-five days. At any given time they have approximately 42 computer with 100 Mgps download and 10 Mgps upload.

Mr. Russell invited the Board to come and tour the Central Control Facility located on Saw Mill Hollow Road in Burnsville.

Discussion was held on the issues they were experiencing with Duke Energy and the cost associated with utilizing their poles. Mr. Russell stated that he would be going to Raleigh in the next couple of weeks to meet with Duke Energy. Chairman Slagle stated that any of the Board would be willing to attend that meeting if he felt that it would be beneficial.

Chairman Slagle request a copy of their maps to use for economic development.

Mr. Russell stated they had to provide justification for the project to receive the grant funding. He asked that Mitchell County help get the word out about the project and to ask any citizen or business interested in obtaining this service to call 828-682-4706.

- C. **Application for Public School Building Capital Fund** – Superintendent Spurling reviewed the application for Public School Building Capital Fund North Carolina Education Lottery for renovations for Bowman Middle School Auditorium.

Commissioner Street moved to approve the Application for Public School Building Capital Fund (a copy of the application and quotes are hereby attached and becomes a part of the minutes). Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

- D. **TEC Data Systems Valuation Services** - Tax Assessor Hyder stated the Tax Office had experienced a significant uptick in the number of appeals lodged relative to vehicle valuations in the last quarter of 2013. Staff confirmed in most of the appeal cases the values assigned by our third party valuation vendor resulted in an over-assessment. If the valuations were appealed by the taxpayer the values were corrected to a proper assessed value. This situation transpired while the final transition to the Tax & Tag Together Program was being implemented and was limited to the vehicles billed by the county on the old vehicle tax system.

The exact cause of this situation likely is related to a corrupt or mis-installed update file that is annually provided by the vendor in November and installed by County staff. Given the amount of interaction with the vendor over the last eighteen months associated with the migration of data to the new Tag & Tag program, I find it completely unacceptable that the problem was not identified by the vendor and corrected. The last two years of dealing with this vendor has been a constant struggle. Since we identified this problem we have withheld payment to the company. The North Carolina Department of Revenue has been consulted in this matter to help identify the problem and help the County move towards a resolution to the matter. The NCDOR staff member that I have been in contact with indicated that one of their staff would be coming to the County in the next few months. That was two months ago and the last e-mail inquiry sent to them a month ago has not been responded to as of yet.

Limited reporting capability in the old vehicle tax system is hindering our ability to identify and address the problem we have on hand. We are currently seeking a consultant to extract data from our old system and produce it in an environment

that will allow up to report and filter the data. We remain committed to resolving this problem and serving the public by correcting this issue.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

A. W.A.M.Y. FY 2014-2015 Application for Funding

B. Vehicle Refunds/Releases

C. Property Refunds/Releases/Discoveries for December

Commissioner Holtsclaw moved to approve the Consent Agenda (a copy of the Consent Agenda Items are hereby attached and become a part of the minutes). Commissioner Street seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

11. COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT – County Manager Vines informed the Board the County Offices and Sanitation would not be opening until 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2014.

12. BOARD COMMENTS – Commissioner Holtsclaw ask County Manager Vines to write a letter to W.A.M.Y. asking for a copy of their budget and a matrix showing the number of people in Mitchell County receiving services from them.

Chairman Slagle ask the Board about having an all-day planning session toward the end of February or first of March. By consensus the Board agreed to meet at 9:00 a.m. on March 3, 2014 for the planning session.

13. ADJOURNMENT – Commissioner Street moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Holtsclaw seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

MITCHELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Bill Slagle, Chairman

Joe Street, Vice-Chairman

Ken Hollifield, Member

Keith Holtsclaw, Member

Rickey McKinney, Member

ATTEST:

Kathy Young, NCCCC Clerk to the Board