

November 13, 2012 – Work Session

The Swain County Board of Commissioners held a work session on November 13, 2012. Present were Chairman Carson, Vice-Chair White, Commissioner Dixon, Commissioner Moon, and Commissioner Monteith.

Chairman Carson called the meeting to order and led the pledge.

Commissioner Dixon made a motion to adjust the agenda as need be. Commissioner Monteith seconded the motion. A vote was unanimous.

Items for Discussion:

-DSS Issues: Kevin King discussed State funded cuts for the Foster Care Program.

Informal Discussion:

-Kevin King discussed possible financing of 2 economic development projects: steam engine & turntable - \$700,000

-Discussed press release regarding the economic development projects

Press Release

The Swain County Board of Commissioners entertained a request from the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) in February 2012 to establish an increase in the room occupancy tax from 3% to 4% to help increase tourism for Swain County. The TDA and Chamber of Commerce indicated that the additional percent tax be allocated to three projects. The first project is the Swain County Museum and Visitor Center, the second is the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad and the third is the 2013 World Freestyle Kayak Championship.

The County Board of Commissioners agreed with the TDA and Chamber of Commerce in the establishment of this room tax and the development of the three attractions. The room tax was started in April of 2012 and the TDA has made the allocations to the County for 2/3 of the tax for development of the Museum and Railroad projects. This tax is not paid by the local citizen; it is paid by visitors to the area.

The County Board of Commissioners voted on September 14, 2012 on a contract between the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad and Swain County. The contract is for an economic incentive loan to the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad and not a grant. The contract stipulates that the County will own the 2.04 acre parcel of property located at 103 Everett Street and the 1702 steam engine for the duration of the contact between GSMR and the County. The County has stipulated certain requirements to GSMR, such as, county will pay all invoices to venders for construction turntable and rehabilitation of steam engine, steam will return to Swain County with 36 months of closing, land and steam engine will be owned by the county, six jobs will be created, and steam excursions must leave Bryson City on a regular schedule for at least 15 consecutive years. All the above must be executed or the GSMR will be required to pay back all loan expenditures plus 7.5% interest.

The County Board of Commissioner held a public hearing on the proposed project and the financing of the project on October 9, 2012. After the public hearing the Board of Commissioners gave the authorization to the Finance Officer to file financing documentation to the North Carolina Local Government Commission for approval.

-Status on consolidation of DSS and Health Dept.: working to centralize finances at SC Admin. Building and to integrate financial and personnel pieces.

-Employee cell phone monthly stipend rather than the County keeping up with individual's accounts and bills.

Public Comments: none

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss at this time, Commissioner Dixon made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Monteith seconded the motion. A vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindi C. Woodard,
Clerk to the Board

Phil Carson,
Chairman

Swain County Commissioners

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