

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
Armory Worksession
March 29, 2021
6:30 p.m.
Cherokee County Courthouse

Members present: Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, Chairman; Jan Griggs, Vice-Chairman; Cal Stiles, member; Randy Phillips, member; and Gary Westmoreland, member.

Staff present: Randy Wiggins, County Manager; Maria Hass, Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board; Candy Anderson, Finance Director; and, Darryl Brown, County Attorney.

Also present: WKRK Radio, Local TV4 and Cherokee Scout.

Call to order and ethics statement by Chairman.

Invocation and Pledge

Modification of Agenda

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to add a closed session to the end of the meeting, pursuant to §143-318.11(a) (6), to discuss a personnel issue. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.

Airport Fence and Gate Discussion

Gayland Trull, airport FBO, came before the Board to request code-access gates, fencing, and additional security cameras at the airport. He said that he is finding drug paraphernalia on the property and that there is vehicle traffic at all hours of the night. Mr. Trull proposed a 1,500 ft. fence with three 28 ft. gates at each of the three access roads off of Airport Road. The county attorney said that the county would need to acquire an easement to place a portion of the fence on the Wood property, as Mr. Trull proposed doing. He also said if the airport is to be gated that modifications would need to be made to airport leases. After discussion, it was determined that the assistant county manager would look into airport grant opportunities for the access gates and fencing, and that she would submit a request to the I.T. department to contact Mr. Trull to determine camera locations, and to research the cost of replacing the current camera system.

The Board gave Mr. Trull permission to begin obtaining quotes for the fence and gate project, in the event that the project cannot be covered by grant funds.

Town of Andrews Request

Mayor Reid came before the Board to ask for assistance with funding a new playground in Andrews. After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Phillips to approve funding the project at 50%, and up \$40,000. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously. Mayor Reid will submit a project plan prior to project development. Cherokee County will provide funding through reimbursement of paid invoices.

EMS Station 1 Update

Joel Storrow, of McGill Associates, came before the board to give an update on EMS Station 1 and to seek the board's direction concerning the sewer system for the station. There were two options. One option was to pay for an upgrade of the Town's existing public collection system, and a partial build out of a larger regional lift station that would serve future development at the Peachtree Street/19-74 intersection. The county's estimated cost share of option one was \$260,000, with the Town providing \$140,000 from remaining ARC grant funds. The other option was to construct a smaller stand-alone lift station with force main connecting to the Town's existing system. This option would cost \$50,000 and be dedicated solely to the new EMS Station 1. After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Stiles to approve the smaller stand-alone lift station at an estimated cost of \$50,000. Motion seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Voting in favor of the Motion was Commissioner Stiles, Griggs, Eichenbaum and Phillips. Voting against the Motion was Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed 4-1.

Armory Discussion

Cherokee County Emergency Management Coordinator, Robin Caldwell, along with Murphy Fire Chief, Al Lovingood, came before the board to request use of the armory for an emergency complex. The complex would house Cherokee County Emergency Management, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Administration, 911 addressing, and serve as an Emergency Operations Center. Mrs. Caldwell told the Board that the facility could also serve as a temporary mobile dispatch center, if needed during an emergency or an event. Additionally, a portion of the armory would be renovated and utilized as a new fire station to serve Murphy Rural Fire District. Chief Lovingood said that the shared facility would be a joint effort between Murphy Fire Department and Emergency Management and he proposed accomplishing the move through an intergovernmental agreement. He explained that with the multi-story casino and hotel and other multi-story lodging facilities, as well as potential future growth in the recently developed commercial area that it is necessary to have an engine company and a ladder company stationed within the insurance service area. He said the armory location would meet the criteria of the Insurance Service Office (ISO), and went on to explain that having a fire station at the armory would increase Murphy Rural's insurance rating; although, it is unknown at this time what the impact will be. Chief Lovingood proposed paying Cherokee County \$200,000 for the portion of the armory that would become the new fire station. The \$200,000 would be paid over four (4) years, in annual payments of \$50,000. He said that minimum renovations would be necessary and that the fire department would pay for the renovations.

After presentation and discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Griggs to approve utilizing the armory for the offices of Cherokee County Emergency Management, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Administration, 911 addressing, and to serve as an Emergency Operations Center. Additionally, the Motion approves granting Murphy Rural Fire Department a portion of the armory for the purpose of a new fire station to serve Murphy Rural Fire District, at an agreed upon cost of \$200,000 to be paid over four (4) years at \$50,000 a year. Motion seconded by Commissioner Eichenbaum. Motion passed unanimously.

VA Office Discussion

A Motion was made by Commissioner Griggs to relocate the Veteran's Office to the Code Enforcement building when Emergency Management, EMS administration, and 911 Addressing move out of the building. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stiles. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Discussion

- After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Phillips to leave the flag pole at the armory, instead of moving it to the new EMS Station 1. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.
- The finance director and county manager discussed fund balance and explained to the Board how the county's fund balance is broken down by components; e.g., restricted, assigned, unassigned, non-spendable, etc.
- There was discussion about possible locations for a new EMS Station 2.
- Commissioner Griggs shared her vision of a five year plan for funding capital needs and projects.
- Commissioner Phillips said the Board of Elections and Senior Center needed to be in better locations.
- After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Stiles to grant an easement to Blue Ridge Mountain EMC for the purpose of providing electric and communications services to the new Hiwassee Dam Fire Department. Motion seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session

Motion made by Commissioner Stiles to go into closed session to pursuant to §143-318.11(a) (6) to discuss a personnel issue. Motion seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Motion passed unanimously. During closed session the board discussed an incident involving a solid waste employee.

After returning to open session, there was no action to be taken on the personnel matter.

There being no further business, a Motion was made by Commissioner Stiles to adjourn. Motion seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 P.M.