

JOINT WATER MEETING
POLK COUNTY BOC, TOWN OF COLUMBUS,
TOWN OF TRYON, CITY OF SALUDA
7:00pm, February 22, 2011
Columbus Town Hall

Members Present - Polk County Commissioners Chair Ray Gasperson, Ted Owens, Tom Pack and Cindy Walker; Saluda City Commissioners Mayor Fred Baisden, John Morgan, Johnnie Kinard and Leon Morgan; Town of Tryon Council Members Mayor Alan Peoples, Austin Chapman, Roy Miller and Doug Arbogast; Town of Columbus Council Members Mayor Eric McIntyre, Margaret Metcalf, Ernie Kan, Richard Hall and Michael Gage.

Staff Present - Columbus Manager Jonathan Kanipe, Columbus Town Clerk Donna Butler, Polk County Manager Ryan Whitson, Polk County Clerk to the Board Beth Fehrmann, Saluda Administrator Erny Williams, Tryon Manager Justin Hembree, and Tryon Town Clerk Susan Bell. The facilitator was Josh King of Isothermal Planning and Development Commission.

Guest Speakers – Forest Moody, Mayor of Sylva, and Brenda Oliver, former Mayor of Sylva and current Tuckaseegee Water & Sewer Authority board member.

Town of Tryon Mayor Fred Baisden called the meeting to order.

Mr. Moody and Ms. Oliver gave an overview of the Tuckaseegee Water & Sewer Authority (TWSA). A copy of the Jackson County Water & Sewer Consolidation and Transfer Agreement is on file with these minutes. TWSA was created in 1992, when the County of Jackson and the Towns of Dillsboro, Sylva and Webster consolidated their water and wastewater treatment facilities. TWSA board members are appointed by the elected town officials for a three year term, with a term limit of nine years. The TWSA executive director is hired by the TWSA board. In addition to the TWSA board, a Water & Sewer Planning Committee representing the towns was established and meets annually.

Although a significant amount of grant money was obtained for this project, each entity involved had to contribute financially. Having turned over their infrastructure and revenues to the TWSA, the first couple of years were very difficult financially for the towns. Expenses were offset by transferring appropriate employees to TWSA. It took approximately three years for the TWSA to become profitable. It is recommended that a water authority should allocate a minimum of 5% percent of revenues aside annually for water/sewer expansion. In spite of the difficulties, creating TWSA was the only way for Jackson County to remain progressive.

A subcommittee comprised of the County and Town Managers was instructed to create a water authority plan.

Regarding economic development, it was suggested that the towns work with the current Polk County Economic Development Commissioner (EDC) to attract visitors to the area. It was the consensus of the group that the EDC should attend the next joint meeting for the purpose of receiving input from elected officials concerning local economic development.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm. The next meeting was scheduled for April 26, 2011, at 7:00pm at Columbus Town Hall. (The meeting has since been rescheduled for May 24, 2011.) Columbus will sponsor the meeting.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS

Beth Fehrmann
Clerk to the Board

Ray Gasperson
Chair