

**March 12, 2019 Work Session Topics**

**Don Adams** <donadams@jacksonnc.org>  
To: Ron Mau - Commissioner <ronmau@jacksonnc.org>  
Bcc: brianmcmahan@jacksonnc.org

Fri, Mar 8, 2019 at 10:16 AM

I will put the first two items under your name ( I will have Michael Hopkins come to the Board about the survey). This means you will take the lead on the first two topics.

1. Open checkbook policy – As discussed previously, it is believed that the law discussed is triggered by the State following through with their side and providing direction/guidance on this issue to the local governments. I have gotten an update from David Nicholson on his meeting with the State Treasurer. His email will be part of the agenda packet. He basically states that he does not believe the State will be coming out with any kind of guidance any time soon. So it is up to the Board to direct Finance Officer Darlene Fox to move forward based upon policy versus law.

2. Land Conservation Policy – I have attempted to find models to go by from other Counties in the State. I have not found a model at this point. I believe some of the policy points in your draft proposal matches recent actions of the Board while other points do not match recent actions of the Board. I base this statement on the fact that the Board just approved the 413 Acre Black Rock Project. So I am requesting that you discuss the proposed policy points with the Board. The following summarizes my thoughts on the proposal as it relates to the Board's recent actions on the Black Rock Project.

The following points of the attached proposal seem to correspond (or does not directly contradict) the most recent actions taken on the Black Rock Project: **1.** The purpose of this section is to ensure investment in areas identified by our plans as strategic conservation areas. According to our comprehensive plan, a portion of the 413 acres contains the highest biodiversity and wildlife habitat assessment ratings. **2.** – Land Trust organizations should be accredited by the Land Trust Alliance to help ensure that we are working with a reputable organization. Both the Conservation Fund and Mainspring Conservation Trust are accredited by the Land Trust Alliance. **4.** – County should be made aware of grants being pursued up front if we are asked to partner in the program. Although the actual application was not presented to the Board, the Board did approve a conditional commitment letter to be submitted to the Clean Water Management Trust Fund. **5.** – Relates to number one in that staff is just evaluating a proposed project to make sure it is consistent with our existing plans. A formal evaluation was not submitted in the Black Rock project but as stated earlier a portion of the 413 acres tract contains high biodiversity ratings. **7.** - Just allows us to conduct our own appraisal. We required the Conservation Fund to conduct two independent appraisals. **9.** - The 1<sup>st</sup> half of nine refers to evaluating the proposed easement holder's capability to maintain easements. The Mainspring Conservation Trust is accredited by the Land Trust Alliance and has a good history in this area. Although not followed directly as written, most of the proposed points above were achievable in the Black Rock Project and seem to coincide with the Board's actions. So I would be comfortable instructing staff to formalize the above points (1,2,4,5,7, first half of 9) into a policy for Board consideration. If the Board believes that a policy is necessary, then the Board needs to give me specific instruction to include these points into the policy.

The following points of the attached proposal either contradict actions taken by the Board on the 413 Acre Black Rock Project or seem redundant: Number **3.** refers to guidelines issued by the Land Trust Alliance. Organizations that are accredited by the Land Trust Alliance should already comply with these standards. So this portion of proposed rule **3.** seems redundant if we plan on abiding by point number 2 and work with organizations that have been accredited by the Land Trust Alliance. This section also arbitrarily limits the County's participation based upon tax assessed value. If this tax assessment rule was applied to the Black Rock Project then the County would have not have invested in this deal. This portion of point **3.** seems to contradict previous actions of the Board. I am not sure what the purpose is for number **6.** Please discuss with the Board. Number **8.** basically details a way to calculate loss of property tax revenue if a piece of property is taken off of the tax rolls. But it then attempts to limit the sitting and future Board's potential investment by requiring that the results of this formula be subtracted from the match requested from the County. This formula would have limited the Board's ability to invest \$250,000 into the Black Rock Project. This proposed rule seems to contradict previous actions of the Board. The second half of **9.** also attempts to create a set amount of reimbursement the County expects to receive if the County is the easement holder. This proposed point does not apply to the Black Rock Project but seems to attempt to limit the sitting and future Board's ability to make a financial decision based upon the specifics of the project. As best that I can tell if the mathematics on the second half of number **3.** and number **8.** were applied to the most recent 413 acre Blackrock Project then Jackson County would not have participated in this project. This seems to contradict the previous action of the Board. At this point I am not comfortable instructing staff to formalize the above points (3,6,8, second half of 9) into a policy for Board consideration. If the Board believes that a policy is necessary, then the Board needs to give me specific instructions to include these points into the policy.

3. I have met with Rusty Ellis and Michael Hopkins on this issue. Michael Hopkins will be appearing before the Board at the work session. Since there has been some questions regarding the old survey data we thought it appropriate to share with the Board as a whole. This information is included in your agenda packets. Mr. Hopkin will go over this information with the Board. Staff needs directions on the new survey being requested. We will discuss with the Board what additional information the Board desires in this new survey. We will also discuss potential surveying methods with the Board. After we get this direction and information then we can develop the survey, method of collection and timeline of completion.

Don Adams

Jackson County Manager

P.S. I have Bcc all Commissioners to this email.

**From:** Ron Mau - Commissioner <ronmau@jacksonnc.org>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 03, 2019 12:07 PM  
**To:** Don Adams <donadams@jacksonnc.org>  
**Subject:** Re: March 12, 2019 Work Session Topics

Don,

Other items:

Open checkbook/transparency. (somewhat related is the \$1.4 million charge for health insurance plan and corrected audited statements)

Land Conservation policy. This was mentioned by you back in December. No updates have been received so I took the liberty to update previous draft.

Status on indoor pool surveys etc. Whether we move forward with a new survey or not; there is no reason not to have questions ready to go by 12 March. There is no reason to let this issue drag on and basically time-out again. Or is the plan to just have Mr. Ellis go ahead and have survey completed ASAP. If the plan is for Mr. Ellis to get the survey up and running I would assume the survey would be up and running by the middle of March at the latest.

I have had constituents who have heard the plan may be to conduct yet another survey ask why if that is indeed the case, the administration of said survey has not already commenced.

[Quoted text hidden]  
[Quoted text hidden]

---

 Land Conservation Trust Easement Policy - V2.docx  
20K