

Board readies to buy 23 acres

Land will be used for administration building, center

By Ashley Fuller
Cherokee Tribune Staff Writer

Cherokee County now has a location on which to build its new administration building and conference center.

The county Board of Commissioners voted Tuesday night to purchase 23.64 acres on Bluffs Parkway in The Bluffs at Technology Park in Canton. The county is expected to close on the land by the end of the month, according to County Manager Jerry Cooper. The cost of the land is \$1.773 million and will be paid for using Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax revenue.

The land previously was owned by the Development Authority of Cherokee County, which sold the

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land to Technology Park of Atlanta, which is developing the mixed-use project, earlier this year.

Grading on the site would begin this fall, Cooper said, with the building to be open within two years. County officials this week will tour the boardrooms of other metro area governments, including Fulton and Henry counties and Atlanta, to gather ideas for the new building.

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Land

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The board had considered building on a site on Highway 20 near Interstate 575 and sent a letter to the property owner earlier this year to express its interest.

"That was my first choice just because of the location," commission Chairman Mike Byrd said. "But three separate engineering firms told us the Bluffs would be a much more appropriate site."

Commissioner Harry Johnston said the site in the Bluffs would be cheaper to prepare for construction because it was flatter than the Highway 20 site. He said relocating the county offices to the Bluffs also might spark interest in the development.

"Our move in there will help get that area going," he said. In March, the county approved a \$22.3 million design and build proposal from The Facility Group to construct the building. The construction tab also will be paid for with SPLOST dollars.

The county originally planned on using land behind the Historic Court house in downtown Canton for the administration building and conference center,

Tax

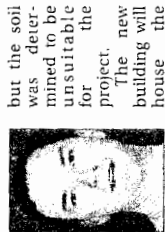
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than it is sorry," he said. "It's easy to say we have

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners agenda

- The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday night considered the following agenda items:
 - Approved a request by Charles and Kelly Vincent to rezone 4.86 acres on Hickory Flat Highway/Highway 140 near Eatesville Road from R-40 single-family residential to general commercial for unspecified commercial purposes.
 - Approved a request by Autumn Hill Nursery to rezone 1.03 acres on Reinhardt College Parkway/Highway 140 near Pea Ridge Road from R-40 single-family residential to neighborhood commercial for a garden center.
 - Approved a request by Roy Atkins to rezone 1.36 acres on Toonigh Road near Highway 5 from agricultural to R-20 single-family residential for one house.
 - Approved an amendment to the
- county zoning law regarding the definition of extended stay motels;
 - Appointed Merton Wilson and Scott McElroy to the Board of Assessors.
 - Commissioner Jim Hubbard discussed developing a methodology to determine the amount of residential construction approved but not occupied, but no action was taken.
 - Agreed to start a Citizen Information Technology committee, which will make recommendations to the board regarding the purchase of new technology.
 - Approved a sanitary sewer easement on the fire station property on Vaughn Road for The Orchards development.
 - Awarded a bid to T&T Utilities to supply Cherokee County Fire and Emergency Services with uniforms.
 - Approved a contract with the

- way/Highway 140 south of Sam Nelson Road into the city's boundaries and move the same amount of nearby land outside of the boundaries. The change was made to bring the entire first phase of a proposed development between the highway and Highway 108 by PEC Development Group into the city.
 - Denied hearing an appeal for a zoning Board of Appeals decision, and
 - Hear a notice of annexation and rezoning being considered by the Nelson City Council. Full House Investment has requested be rezoned from R-40 single-family residential to light industrial for an industrial park.
 - During the work session, the board heard presentations on the franchise transfer, the county annual audit and monthly financial reports.
- Purchased three new battalion chief vehicles and a medical control vehicle for Cherokee County Fire-ES;
 - Purchased 12 defibrillators for \$198,998 to be used by Cherokee Fire-ES for advanced diagnostic EKGs in the field;
 - Approved a \$100,000 SPLOST payment to Woodstock to offset the cost of improvements at Arnold Mill and Nease roads;
 - Approved a \$100,000 SPLOST payment to Ball Ground to offset the cost of installing streetscapes in the downtown district.
 - Approved a request for a resolution transferring control of the cable television franchise and cable system of BellSouth Entertainment LLC to AT&T Inc.
 - Approved an amendment to the growth boundary agreement with Canton to bring 65 acres near Reinhardt College Park.

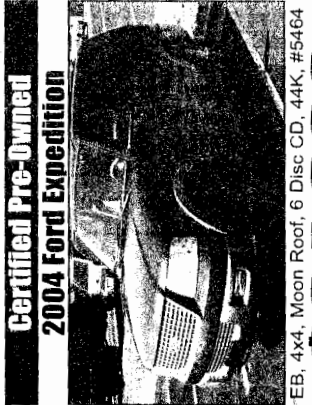


Harry Johnston
county's administrative offices, including the board of commissioners' offices. After the new building is constructed, the Justice Center will be used primarily for courts.

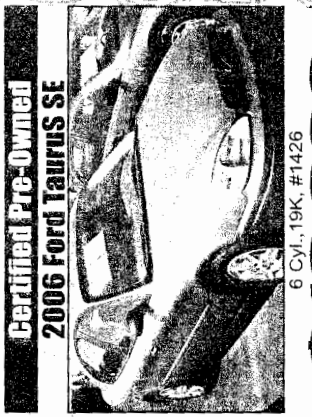
The conference center will include a dining hall and gallery space for 650 people that can be used by local businesses for conferences. ajuller@cherokeetribune.com

shred of evidence that we need this additional tax revenue," he said. "We can balance the budget, leave a healthy balance in the reserve and do everything we wanted to do and cut the property taxes and therefore the millage rate. Why would

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