

DOES THE HOSPITAL NEED EMPLOYEE HOUSING?

In short, all of Highlands needs more employee housing. There are several issues related to housing at the hospital. The Highlands Cashiers Hospital is no longer a nonprofit community hospital. It is a for profit unit of a national corporation with assets in the billions of dollars. If there is a need for employee housing, Hospital Corporation of America should put resources into the effort just as OEI has done in addressing their employee housing issues. As for the town allowing water and sewer for the proposed hospital employee housing site, we could support that with careful study and a substantial commitment from HCA. We are currently three years into a 10-year commitment by HCA to operate the Highlands Cashiers Hospital. It would take four years from today to construct and get a housing facility operational. That schedule would put the timeline very close to the 10-year commitment to operate the hospital. A longer commitment by HCA to operate the hospital would be a desirable component to extending sewer and water beyond the town limits. In addition, water and sewer access to the hospital opens a larger issue of water and sewer in the region north of the Highlands town limits. The Highlands Community Plan identifies this possible town expansion as a future development issue. Expansion of services and annexation of property needs careful study and review by the town board of commissioners.

