The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Work Session on May 29, 2020, 8:30 a.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman                  Don Adams, County Manager
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair                           Heather C. Baker, County Attorney
Mickey Luker, Commissioner (via Zoom video conferencing)   Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board
Ron Mau, Commissioner                              Gayle Woody, Commissioner

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order and stated this was an opportunity to hear from some of the entities the county helped fund and partner with.

(1) **LIBRARY**: Tracy Fitzmaurice, Librarian, (via Zoom video conferencing) thanked the Board for their continued funding of the Jackson County Public Library (JCPL) and the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library (ACCCL) in the 2020-2021 Jackson County Budget. They were particularly thankful that year because they understood the emotional and financial burden that the Covid-19 pandemic had on the community.

She emailed each Commissioner a copy of the Fontana Regional Library 2019 Annual Report. She hoped they would find the time to review this regional report to see how the libraries supported the communities in 2019. Plans for 2020 included a continuation of MakerTools programming, participating for a second year in the Summer Nutrition Program, partnering with Southwestern Community College to offer résumé writing instruction on a weekly basis on site at the library and a whole array of programs and services.

She noted that in the Annual Report, circulation of resources continued to grow and they were meeting this with increased access to eResources. It went without saying that many of these plans had been modified. The Summer Learning Programs for children, teens and adults would now take place primarily online. Large capacity programs had been cancelled and some of them would be offered through social media instead. Luckily they had great library staff and they were coming up with some wonderful alternatives to keep children engaged.

While closed to the public, they kept up their service to the community. They maintained Wi-Fi access outside of the buildings with over 4,400 uses between the two libraries (3/15-5/15). They also increased access to online eBooks, eAudiobooks, streaming video and online education tools such as Universal Class. They used social media platforms to stay connected to their patrons and answer questions, while critical staff also worked by phone with patrons to help them get library cards and walk them through using electronic resources. Since starting curb service, staff had pulled hundreds of requests off the shelves to deliver to patrons outside of their buildings.

If all went as planned, they would open to the public on June 8th. They worked with the Health Department to make sure the libraries were as safe as possible for staff and patrons. During the time they were closed to the public, they had been working hard to apply for grants to support possible shortfalls in the coming fiscal year. They were awarded $4,000 from a State Library of North Carolina LSTA grant to purchase acrylic sneeze guards, masks, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer. The acrylic screens would be in place before opening to the public.
There were four other grants they were hoping to achieve: NC Humanities Council CARES, SLNC CARES (a digital inclusion and technical support grant); Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation (to supply children’s books to the summer lunch program); and LSTA remote printing grant (patrons would be able to print from their phones or home computer and pick-up the prints at the library). They continued to research other grant possibilities, although many grants being offered at the moment were targeted to organizations serving immediate health, food and housing needs.

Unfortunately, grants were not available to cover increases in medical benefits, wages and other cost increases. Their initial budget request to the county included what their Blue Cross Blue Shield agent estimated as a 12% increase in the cost of employee health insurance premiums. The BCBS increase came in at 16.5%, which fortunately was reduced to 5% after their insurance agent discussed possible alternative insurance options.

She provided an updated budget request that included significant cuts to resources, eResources and programming lines. These cuts would cover the increase in health insurance and other increases in operating expenditures. Their initial budget request included a 1.6% Cost-of-Living Adjustment for staff and this updated budget still included that increase. This translated to a request for an additional $12,971 or approximately a 1% increase. Their staff was their most valued asset and made what they did in the libraries possible.

She thanked them for their continued support of the Jackson County Public Library and the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library.

Commissioner Woody stated that people in the community had mentioned the different services they had missed and she thought that brought to the forefront how important the library was to the community on so many levels.

Commissioner Luker stated that she did a fantastic job. Looking over the annual report, it looked like foot traffic over the past five years was down around 22%, which it looked like they had made up for in virtual visits. How had she balance her staff from walk-ins to virtual? Also, looking at the budget and the annual report, he did not see a breakdown of total grants, but it looked like she had been very successful in obtaining grants.

Ms. Fitzmaurice stated that it was a trend across all libraries that foot traffic was down and it seemed that they would not be as busy in the building, but the amount of virtual support her staff was giving went up every day. Their numbers had not went down as much as other libraries, but she thought they had the most beautiful library. The numbers reflected the region as a whole. She would send them her numbers individually.

Commissioner Luker stated that under her leadership the expansion of what she had done with the library and the service they provided had taken them to new levels. That was to commend her on her expertise and leadership.

Ms. Fitzmaurice stated that when it came to grants, most of them were under the FRL umbrella and that money went through that account and was disbursed from headquarters. Unless it was a specific grant for Jackson County only, they did not show up in the Jackson County budget.

Chairman McMahan thanked them for all that they did and the service that was provided.

*Informational item.*
Sheriff's Office: Sheriff Chip Hall; Chief Deputy Kim Hooper; Major Shannon Queen; and Shena Phillips, Executive Assistant to the Sheriff, were present (via Zoom video conferencing) for this item.

Sheriff Hall presented:

(a) Fiscal year 2020-21 Sheriff’s Office Goals:
- The continued primary goal of the office for the 2020-21 fiscal year was employee recruitment and retention by sufficiently paying those who were currently employed and becoming a more marketable employer with equal pay or better to those agencies in the surrounding area.
- A continued goal was to enhance detention officer safety and provide inmates with closer supervision with the replacement of a detention officer lost to court security a number of years ago.
- A continued goal was to successfully balance their needs and accomplish their goals in efforts to provide a community driven approach to law enforcement, especially with the enhancements to the investigations division with the addition of more investigators.
- A goal for the office was also to provide an efficient use of assets available by continuing to purchase needed equipment that enhanced deputy and detention office safety, while ensuring public trust and safe and secure housing of inmates.

(b) Sheriff’s office FY 2020-21 Budget Proposal:
- Deputy and Detention Pay Improvement Plan. Funding to the officers in an effort to keep and retain good applicants. They were requesting to look at some of the senior deputy and mid-level supervision to move forward with increases in their reclassifications. There was a request for reclassifications for each officer from the detention officers to the major and chief deputy.
- Paid Educational/Training Incentive
- Paid Holidays
- Hazard Duty Pay. Holiday pay they get leave time for holiday, but for public safety officials and staff be considered holiday pay. The same applied for hazard pay. With COVID, a lot of officers were exposed to a lot of environment that were not healthy for them or the workplace. Some agencies were considering hazard pay. The state had some bills in the general assembly for public safety personnel to receive hazard duty pay. He encouraged them to look at what was being presented in the Legislature. He thought that would be more broad with fire, safety, EMS, etc.
- New Personnel. Requesting for one Criminal Investigator to be assigned to the Criminal Investigator Division. The case load to the investigators was higher than the surrounding counties. They wanted to reduce the load. A big contributor was the off-campus housing at WCU, which was not going to get any better.
- Reclassification Personnel
- Non-Capital Line Item Increase
- Capital Outlay
- Capital Outlay – Motor Vehicles

(c) Jail Budget: Staff had done a good job keeping the jail safe during COVID-19
- New Personnel. Request one additional detention officer
- Non-Capital Line Item Increase
- Capital Outlay Carry over items from 2019-2020 request most items need TLC. They had a moisture problem with the showers, which was a common problem. Ask for additional money for improvements to reflect better on biannual inspection
- Capital Outlay Motor Vehicle. Replace inmate work crew truck
- Detention Facility Maintenance
General discussions were held.

Chairman McMahan stated that in a normal year, they would sit down and go through the budget process and analyze the requests and then match that up with the availability of funds through the normal pots of money to see if they could meet those requests. That year was different in that they had been dealing with the pandemic. They had increased expenses and also had changes to the way they had to do business, which increased expenses. He knew that the Sheriff, as well as other departments, had been working to try to keep track of those costs and were coding those to get reimbursements to keep a running tab on how much the pandemic was costing them as a county government. As they looked at his budget, they would specifically be looking if there were items included that may be eligible to be paid for under COVID-19 funds they were receiving from state and federal governments.

There may be other additional items they may want to talk about at some point. There had been discussions about potential video systems, jail modifications structurally that needed to be made going forward. There were a lot of discussions that may still also be added to this. It was a different time, but they would be taking a look at the numbers and comparing them to the COVID bills that had passed both the General Assembly and Federal Congress to see how they could integrate some of those funds.

Sheriff Hall stated that he appreciated that. They did understand the problems that COVID had brought to the nation and whole world and it would change things for the future for everyone. They had made significant changes within his office in the last couple of months and it would carry on into the future. He applauded the jail staff as they had implemented a lot of new programs to keep the jail environment clean. Any funding request they could meet they were appreciative of.

Chairman McMahan stated that they would do their best to meet as much as they could. They appreciated everything the Sheriff and his staff had done.

*Informational item.*

(3) **SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** Dr. Don Tomas, President and William Brothers, CFO, were present (via Zoom video conferencing) for this item.

Dr. Tomas thanked the Board for the opportunity, he knew it was unprecedented times the way they were presenting and making requests. He thanked them for their leadership for the county and the things they had implemented to help create a safer environment for them. They were there to work with, to serve and do their part as best they could as they worked through the virus.

Mr. Brothers stated there was still some discussion of a House Bill calling for legislative salary increases, but they did not know what that would end up looking like. They would continue to monitor that.

(a) Assumptions affecting 2020-21 budget:

- The impact from COVID-19 was yet to be determined, however the College was working with the Systems Office for guidance and forward implementation.
- The College was ever-mindful for funds for capital and have requested 349,126.21 for these needs; down approximately 19.04% versus 2019/2020.
- Proposed legislative discussion regarding across the board salary increases for community colleges was presented at 2%. The College continues to monitor this situation in light of COVID-19.
- Employer contribution for teachers and state employees’ retirement increased from 19.70% to 20.43%.

(b) Operating Expenses – Operating Budget Requests:

- 2017-18 $1,978,829
- 2018-19 $2,003,898
- 2019-20 $2,050,989
- 2020-21 $2,092,289
- Growth between 2017-18 to 2020-21 (projected) was 5.92%. Average growth was 1.48% per year.
(c) Operating Expense Detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense Category</th>
<th>Expense Detail 2019-20</th>
<th>Expense Detail 2020-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Operations, Salary and Benefits</td>
<td>$1,045,313.27</td>
<td>$1,155,796.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities and Supplies</td>
<td>$568,432.34</td>
<td>$604,575.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>$90,813.99</td>
<td>$224,066.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software, Maintenance and General Expenses</td>
<td>$346,429.40</td>
<td>$107,850.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$2,050,989.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,092,288.80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) Capital Requests – Capital Budget Requests:
- 2017-18 $935,800.00
- 2018-19 $704,125.00
- 2019-20 $431,213.00
- 2020-21 $349,126.00

(e) Capital Request Detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Items</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boiler – Founders Hall</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$135,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing – Bradford Hall</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$25,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three additional new fleet vehicles</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$89,637.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford Deck</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$17,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Deere riding mower</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidental Capital requests</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$41,918.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase new carpet cleaning equipment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$3,265.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tow-behind aerator</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottle filling water station FH 2nd floor</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$1,790.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office carpet – Oaks Hall Suite G4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$3,608.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office carpet – Oaks Hall SSS Suite</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$3,608.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of wall between LAC/Tutoring Center</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting for the division (areas outside of offices)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balsam 2nd floor painting</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$1,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install a window at Summit 119 classroom</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$1,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance into Kirk, Tom and Scott’s area</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>$10,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window for small office</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$349,126.21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(f) Summary of Total Requests:
- 2017-18 $2,914,629.00
- 2018-19 $2,708,023.00
- 2019-20 $2,482,202.00
- 2020-21 $2,441,415.00

Chairman McMahan stated that he wanted to give his kudos to the SCC staff on the great job they did. He always enjoyed driving through the camps. The landscaping and work that was done outside to make the facilities look like they did – they did a tremendous job. The state recognized that when they did inspections of facilities. There was a lot of pride put into those facilities. He appreciated the work that SCC staff did on the upkeep, it showed very much.
Mr. Adams stated that everyone on that day’s agenda fell into the category he discussed in the budget recommendation meeting, where they were looking to try and fund certain portions of the operations, but they needed to wait until January 2021 to find out where the county revenues would land. This applied to the Sheriff and everyone else. For example, a lot of the capital needs mentioned would probably be addressed, but the personnel needs the Sheriff mentioned, they really needed to get a grasp of what revenues would be before they funded those ongoing expenses.

Very similar with SCC, the proposed budget at that point was to freeze the current expenses, but they had been able in the proposed budget to meet their capital requests. They would have the same conversation with the Board of Education when they appeared before the Board. Secondly, in his budget recommendation, he mentioned that SCC would be receiving Cares Act money, but they were not clear on how they would be able to spend those funds. The last number Dr. Tomas gave him was $1.1 million and a lot of that had to go to financial support of students.

Dr. Tomas stated that it was about $1.1 million and the first half of the funding that came to them all had to go to students’ financial needs that were affected by the COVID-19 virus from March to present. It gave students on an average $600 each that were affected and qualified for those funds. The second pool of money was additional money to support financial needs of the student. The way it was written, SCC as an institution, could code things differently for any additional expenses such as WiFi hotspots, cameras, computers, plexiglass, etc., to prepare the institution for a safe environment for people to return to work and school on campus. They were keeping track of all of those, which they would not have been able to do in the past and would have been looking to the county for those funds.

General discussions were held.

Dr. Tomas stated that he knew these were unprecedented times and there was a lot of uncertainty with revenues, but they were very grateful to the Commissioners for the leadership they brought to the county. Whatever they received in support of maintaining their operations and capital improvements, they would be very grateful.

*Informational item.*

(4) **PUBLIC SCHOOLS:** Dr. Kim Elliott, Superintendent; Alison Laird-Large, School Board Chair; Wes Jamison, School Board Member; Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent; and Kristie Walker, CFO; were present (via Zoom video conferencing) for this item.

Dr. Elliott stated that they appreciated all of the Commissioners for what they did for them each day, but in particular during the pandemic times. It had been a challenge for each of them with regard to funding and she wanted to appreciate all of the Commissioners both current and past for the work that had been done to put them on the on the right paths so that they could problem solve during the pandemic.

Dr. Elliott presented: Budget Request 2020-21:

(a) Historic Jackson County Appropriations for Operations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>$7,767,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$7,670,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$7,478,979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$6,915,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$6,779,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$6,779,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$6,779,482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(b) 2020-21 Request Summary:
- Annual 2% increase, if provided to other departments
- $277,000 for fund balance stabilization (this stabilization was prior to COVID-19)
- $124,000 for uncontrollable costs (Health Insurance and Retirement increases)
- $445,888 for employee supplements (would bring educators’ supplement to 4% and non-instructional employees to $900 annually)
- If these requests could not be granted due to COVID, they requested to be held harmless with no decrease from the 2019-2020 funding.

Mr. Buchanan presented:
(c) Capital Funding Request:
- $235,000 Capital Outlay
- $375,500 Capital Outlay – Maintenance
- $25,000 Capital Outlay – Security Camera Maintenance (new)
- $400,000 Capital Outlay – Technology
- $320,700 Capital Outlay – One to One
- Total cost $189,141

One of the things they should be very proud of as a community, with the Commissioners and School Board, was the move to a One to One environment. They knew that was the right thing to do and if they could just imagine if they had not done that years ago, where they would be now with education in the county with all that was going on and what they were looking to be doing for a time to come. That foresight from the Commissioners and School Board had served the community well.

(d) Capital Projects:
- SMHS Baseball Accessibility Project – on schedule.
- Egress Courtyard Single Entry Point Project – working to finalize plans, which had been approved by local Code Enforcement and had been reviewed by Department of Insurance and State Code Enforcement and were in the final stages of finishing the documents to go out to bid.
- Slope Mitigation Project at Scotts Creek School – On hold. Engineers determined that it did not threaten the school, so they had time to come up with a complete and thoughtful plan and were not requesting funds in the upcoming year other than working with the engineer to develop options.

Commissioner Luker asked for further explanation of what the $235,000 consisted of and an explanation on the $277,000 Fund Balance Stabilization.

Mr. Buchanan stated that the $235,000 was the traditional capital request for maintenance with smaller items such as making general repairs that happened across the school system. The larger Capital Outlay - Maintenance $375,000 was for when Commissioners allowed them to access the funds to be able to work on larger projects to prevent roofs and HVAC’s from failing down the road. That money primarily went to what they called preventative maintenance. At that point, they felt very good about the condition of all of the HVAC systems. They finished the QZAB loan money and did a good job of keeping costs down and were able to include a few projects in the end.

Dr. Elliott stated that regarding fund balance, they had been dipping into fund balance for local employee benefits with the health insurance and retirement increases for the past two years. They had also suffered cuts from the state level in the area of textbooks, technology and teacher assistants. Those line items continued to decrease over the last two years.
Dr. Elliott presented:

(e) Total additional funding requests – supplements/uncontrollable costs/fund balance:

- Year 1 2020-2021 $846,888.00 (Includes replacing Fund Balance expended in 2019-2020 for the 2020-2021 funding request)
- Year 2 2021-2022 $559,442.00
- Year 3 2022-2023 $568,762.00
- Year 4 2023-2024 $578,082.00
- Estimated Fund Balance expended 2019-2021 $277,000.00

They had often commended the Commissioners on the fact that they had been asked many times to step up with regards to state cuts, which they had done and they had also needed to use that amount of Fund Balance over time.

Commissioner Woody wanted to commend them and for having the foresight of having the technology available, which was so important as they faced the COVID crisis. She knew they set up hotspots in each of the schools, did they have any idea how much those were utilized? As Commissioners, they were still working very diligently to increase broadband access countywide. She was curious as to how much the hotspots were utilized, which would indicate where they still had gaps in service.

Dr. Elliott stated that she was asked on behalf of the region of the superintendent group by Representative Joe Sam Queen to compile data for the region. They felt that based on a survey of the students, about 30% of the student body did need to access hotspots or borrow WiFi from a neighbor’s home, public library or the schools’ hotspots. They were extremely pleased to receive 12 units that had gone on top of school buses, which the students did access. As far as dividing out between the wireless hubs at the schools and how many had used the other remote access, they were in the process of totaling those numbers. She could provide them with the regional report as well as Jackson County’s numbers once the Technology Department had the final student numbers in.

It was profound to note that 30% really did not have adequate access. She thought many students may have internet, but may be unable to attend certain things such as Zoom meetings. While their surveys in the past had been adequate at the time, they were certainly not reflective of the amount of internet that had been required and broadband service for video exchange. When students had said in the past they had internet, a lot of that had been unreliable for communicating in class and presenting projects.

Commissioners Woody stated that they would like to have that information to move forward so that when the time came and they were able to, they wanted to address that issue. She thanked Dr. Elliott for the positive comments she had heard of contacting students. She had been privileged to help at Smoky Mountain High School making the lunches that went out. In talking with some of the staff, they stated they made personal contact with every high school student and the ones they could not get a hold of, they ended up going to their homes. She thought that spoke so highly of the dedication of the school staff to really connect with students and make sure that not just their educational, but health and emotional needs were being met as much as possible during that time.

Dr. Elliott stated that when the Governor announced the closure of schools, one of the first things discussed with her Leadership Team at the central office and then at each school level was her hopes. First, she hoped that students, families and all citizens remained healthy. Secondly, that those relationships could be made stronger and the bonds be strengthened between the teachers, staff and families. Also, would be greater broadband access.

Commissioner Mau stated that regarding Capital Outlay – Technology and Capital Outlay – One to One, those dollar amounts looked the same they had seen for years. Although some of this may be covered by Cares, if there were technology needs potentially by the school district, would they get some of that?

Mr. Adams stated that needed to be a follow up question to Dr. Elliott about the amounts of money allocated to the schools and what was her process of figuring out they would utilize those funds.
Commissioner Mau stated that he was wondering if there were more expenses they typically had not been funding. How was it handled with teachers with having cameras at home?

Dr. Elliott stated that their intention was to use part of the Cares Act money to add to the technology needs and acquire what the teachers were going to need in an uncertain time. They were still looking at their chart of accounts and trying to determine, based on allotments, exactly what monies they would have for COVID-19. The largest part would be needed for educational supplementation, whether that be personnel, remote learning, blended learning, supplies and needs.

The next large category was a technology and supply need in regard to additional technician supplements for the late hours that had been worked and a lot of equipment needs. For their planning purposes, they were looking at the supplemental regular education supplies and some health services. Their team came up with a good idea with the Cares Act dollars to hire additional CNA staff to assist them because of what requirements may look like for re-entry into the school year. They also knew that with the Cares Act monies, they would need additional custodial services because of the requirements from the CDC.

Commissioner Deitz thanked Dr. Elliott about her sensibility with the budget and her realization that they really did not know what was going to happen and how much money they would have. He thought she made it clear that she understood that. He thanked them for all they had done since school was out with the food program and keeping people working through that program. They had done a good job being open and showing concern for students.

Dr. Elliott stated that she appreciated the support. They had been very pleased to use some of the state funding for school nutrition, meal delivery, remote learning along with the technology needs with the broadband. That was how they very quickly spent the $95,000.

(f) Student Support Specialists: Dr. Elliot stated that she had additional numbers for them regarding the Student Support Specialists. As they knew, in times of good and things being fairly normal and stable in a community, they needed the Student Support Specialists, but now more than ever. With COVID-19 and some of the emotional needs that students were having and would continue to have when they reentered the schools, she thought it was important for them all to know what good work was going on with what they had provided. The fact that they had laid the groundwork with the Student Support Specialists before COVID-19, a lot of districts around them were looking for additional Student Support Specialists because of COVID-19, they felt their foundation was strong because of the local board support and the Commissioners support.

They received the following support service entries:
- Jackson Community School received 781
- Scott’s Creek received 2,999
- Cullowhee Valley received 2,594
- Smokey Mountain Elementary 1,827
- Fairview 6,139
- Smoky Mountain High 2,836
- Blue Ridge 1,795
- Blue Ridge Early College 1,452
- Jackson County Early College 197

Enrollment was 3,616 at the time the numbers were pulled in early April and they had a total of 20,620 services provided by the additional Student Support Specialists. She commended the Commissioners and the School Board for the number of contacts they had because of the funding they would not have had otherwise. She could not thank them enough for their forward thinking and being proactive with student safety and student emotional needs. Now that COVID-19 occurred, it showed them that they were going to need even more service delivery in the future.
Commissioner Luker stated that recently he had been doing consulting work with a school board from another county. Thinking back over the past couple of years of what they had done, he thought they had been forward thinking with what they had done in the school system and with the safety of the kids. Also, the taxpayers that were willing to step up and pay the extra to make sure the kids were safe and the technology they brought to them. He did not realize how far advanced they were until speaking with a local county. They were using Jackson County as an example in their presentations. They felt Jackson County was advanced eight years in comparison to their county in technology and safety for the kids. That was commendable on everyone as a whole always putting the kids first.

Dr. Elliot stated that she could not agree more. The work and partnership between the local School Board and the Commissioners laid the foundation to help them get through extremely difficult times. Thus far, thanks to their support, they had not conducted any employee layoffs, but that was because of the local Board of Education and Commissioners working together so strongly to lay the foundation for student and employee safety. She did feel they were in an appropriate place to meet a lot of the challenges that were going to be facing them for the future.

Commissioner Woody thanked her for the leadership with the Student Support Specialists. She had heard anecdotally about the impact on students at Smoky Mountain High School and how that had been such a positive addition to those students’ lives and prevented several of them from serious problems, but also staying in school specifically.

Dr. Elliott stated that they were extremely proud of all of their counselling and student support staff as well as the social work team always, but especially in a time of crisis. Those staff members seemed to rise to the top to make sure the students were well cared for every day. They had worked some long hours and reached out to students during the COVID-19 time.

Chairman McMahan thanked them for the presentation and they looked forward to continuing their partnerships.

Informational item.

(5) BUDGET MEETINGS: Mr. Adams stated that if the goal would be to pass the budget by June 23rd, then he would recommend setting up a couple of meetings.

Consenus: Hold a Special Budget Work Session on June 11th at 8:30 a.m. and recess to another date, if necessary.

There being no further business, Commissioner Woody moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Attest: ___________________________ Approved: ___________________________

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman