

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on February 16, 2021, 6:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Tom Stribling, Commissioner
Gayle Woody, Commissioner

Don Adams, County Manager
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **AGENDA**: Commissioner Woody moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Woody moved to approve the minutes of a Regular Meeting of February 02, 2021, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: None.

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**:

(a) Commissioner Jones stated he attended his first Library Board meeting and they were very pleased with the COLA increase. They wanted to pass along their thanks the Commissioners. Also, at SCC, the new Health Sciences Building was 90% completed. He hoped the Commissioners could take a tour of the building in the next month or so. Classes would begin in the building in the fall.

Last fall, the Nursing Program had a 94% passing rate on the state test. None of the other five counties, with community colleges around Jackson County, had a higher rate than 90%. So, SCC was doing very well. Also, there were some preliminary talks with hospital about some type of health care for people that had insurance needs. It was all positive.

(b) Commissioner Woody stated that all of the Commissioners received a letter from Tim Fox of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, with good news. The fines that were levied against the corporation that caused a lot of the damage in Cullowhee, three of the four Notices of Violation had been paid in full for a total of \$51,319.37.

In the letter, Mr. Fox stated that he wanted to recognize two individuals that were instrumental in communicating site conditions to DWR, Steve Beasley and Ken Brown. Mr. Beasley with Jackson County Erosion Control assisted with emails and site pictures all along the way. He had since retired, but she believed he would still be consulting.

Mr. Fox also stated in the letter that he hoped the county would recognize Mr. Brown with the Water Association of the Tuckasegee River (WATR). Mr. Brown's diligent reporting of site conditions helped their division get to the site in time to document conditions. Mr. Brown was the voice for many individuals who were concerned about the impact of water quality downstream of the site. He had never met a more dedicated and passionate individual that cared about the environment and water quality. Mr. Brown should be considered a valued resource for the county. She personally valued Mr. Brown and knew that those of them that worked with him in any way certainly valued his contributions.

Also, last evening, they had a Board of Health meeting with excellent reports. They had a long discussion about the vaccination process and how that was going. They had excellent input from the Health Board, which was made up of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, etc. The thing they all came away with was great admiration and thankfulness to the Department of Public Health for working through all the uncertainties and making the best of every situation.

At the meeting, Shelley Carraway, Health Director, cited Mr. Adams for his leadership and bringing together all the folks that worked on the vaccination site and also working with emergency management. There were a lot of issues coming up as they got to the next stages, as there would be a lot more people in the next group.

They were able to meet in the new building and it was beautiful and very functional. The One Stop was working very well. Everyone was very pleased with the way it was working and the clients were pleased. It was going to really benefit the citizens. Also, Animal Control was fully staffed and they were very pleased about that.

(5) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Adams reported:

(a) January 2021 Zoning and Building Permits: He provided a report that listed the zoning district (if applicable), the owner/business name, the work permitted and the location of the project where the permit was issued. The Planning Department issued one renovation/addition zoning permit in the month of January. Code Enforcement issued two renovation/addition permits in the month of January.

(b) Major Construction Projects:

- Community Service Center was fully occupied and functional. The contractor was finalizing small items such as adding/changing door hardware, purchasing/installing blinds and providing a dumpster enclosure. The final walkthrough would be completed when these last items were completed.
- Animal Rescue Center/Green Energy Park: The contractor was 2% complete and demolition was near completion. The contractor was working on grading and installing storm, water and sewer lines.
- Blue Ridge School Water & Sewer Project: The contractor completed/progressed on items such as ground water tank foundations, underground water line installation, water building foundation and started the grease trap installation.

(c) CDBG Grant: The county received two additional CDBG Grants to help pay for the Blue Ridge School project. Staff, the engineer and the contractors had worked very hard on this project. Michael Poston, Planning Director, had all the final documents to turn into the state for the approval. The timing was important because the money they were spending was the original grant, so they needed to get the two additional grant funds approved. He gave kudos to everyone that worked on the project.

(d) Meeting Schedule Reminders:

Tuesday, February 23rd at 1:00 p.m. Budget Retreat at SCC Burrell Building
Tuesday, March 2nd at 6:00 p.m. Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 9th at 1:00 p.m. Work Session
Thursday, March 11th at 1:00 p.m. Budget Meeting
Tuesday, March 16th at 1:00 p.m. Regular Meeting

(e) **Covid Vaccinations:** He had a management meeting with the Health Department and Emergency Management that morning. He was pleased to tell the Board that the queue list of people waiting for the vaccine 65 and older was down to 3,000. They did not believe there were still 3,000 people 65 and older waiting, as several people found other places to get the vaccine. Through the Call Center, they were receiving calls from Jackson County and the surrounding counties. The 65 or older population for the area was approximately 7,800. He thought they should be proud of how well they were working through this population group.

They were planning for the next phases from the Governor, which would be February 24th and March 10th. February 24th would be priority for the school teachers and daycare workers. They had not released the next prioritization in group three. They were fortunate that through the hospital, they were able to get the K-12 system vaccinated, so they would be dealing with the daycare workers.

Although the Governor made those announcements, they were not planning on addressing the next population groups until they had satisfactorily handled the 65 and older group. They would target groups one and two before they moved on to daycare workers or the next group eligible on March 10th.

The current system of registration for 65 and older was to call 631-HELP and the Call Center would handle the entire registration. This was very labor intensive for volunteers and county workers and was not a sustainable model for the next population group. They felt the current registration system was necessary for the 65 and older group, since that group was a higher percent of people that may not have internet access or have an email address.

For the next group, they were planning to transition to an online scheduling system. A schedule would be released once per week so that people could go online and register themselves. They did recognize there were still a lot of citizens that did not have internet access, so they would also transition the Call Center for different priorities.

Currently, the Call Center was for the registration system, which by federal law, could not only be for Jackson County residents. When they transitioned to an online registration system, they would separate access to how people would get their vaccination. Then, they could turn the Call Center more directly to services for Jackson County citizens versus whoever called the number.

Once they transitioned to the online scheduling system, they would also transition the Call Center to specifically help people learn how to register online and also provide direct assistance to Jackson County residents, who were not on the internet. They would then be able to limit this section to Jackson County residents because at that point, they would not be restricting people from other counties from going online and registering for the clinics. This would allow them to transition the primary function of the Call Center.

They were hoping to quickly get through the 65 and older population group and this would allow them to continue to provide service to the citizens that did not have internet access. This would also allow them to comply with the law regarding to how they allowed people to sign up. That was where they were with the transition. As the Governor would start releasing guidance of who would be next to start receiving vaccinations, that would dictate how they released the schedule to the public. They would come back with more information at a later time.

(f) **WCU Vaccination Clinic:** WCU was hopeful to sponsor an event at the Department on Aging on February 18th. The county was scheduling 300 people and WCU was scheduling 500 people for vaccinations. They were partnering with WCU to allow them to transition into becoming a provider and to gain experience with scheduling. The plan for the next week would be for WCU to transition to their own clinic and the county would continue with their clinic. WCU would also be taking the people currently on the county's queue list.

General discussions were held.

(6) **INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC:** None.

(7) CONSENT AGENDA:

(a) Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the Finance Report for January, 2021 and one Budget Ordinance Amendment for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, for approval.

(b) Brandi Henson, Tax Collector, presented the Tax Collector and Refund Reports for January, 2021, for approval.

Motion: *Commissioner Deitz moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(8) COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: Mr. Adams stated that this item was presented to the Board and discussed with the former Economic Development Director, Rich Price. At the work session, the Board agreed to bring this item back for consideration.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, as presented. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) MEETING SCHEDULE: Mr. Adams stated he previously presented the Board with a list of meetings where there was a conflict in the board room. He researched other potential locations for the meetings, which included SCC and the Health Department.

Motion: *Commissioner Deitz moved to change all the conflicted dates to 6:00 p.m. to be held in Room A201 at the Justice Center. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion.*

Discussion:

Commissioner Woody stated she was flexible and that worked well for her, but she wanted to make it what was best for staff and Commissioners that had other jobs.

Mr. Adams stated it was more work to move, but it was also a day meeting within the normal working hours.

Commissioner Deitz withdrew the motion.

General discussions were held.

Chairman McMahan suggested they do a blend of moving to another site and moving the time to 6:00 p.m.

Motion: *Chairman McMahan moved to revise the meeting schedule as follows:*

- March 16th regular meeting at 1:00 p.m. at SCC, Burrell Building*
- April 13th work session at 1:00 p.m. at SCC, Burrell Building*
- April 20th regular meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the Justice Center, Room A201*
- May 11th work session at 1:00 p.m. at the Health Department*
- May 18th regular meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the Justice Center, Room A201*

Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(10) RESOLUTION R21-06 SUPPORTING THE ABANDONMENT AND ADDITION OF SR 1331 DR. KILLIAN ROAD: Michael Poston, Planning Director, stated this item had been discussed at the work session. NCDOT had confirmed that the road had been constructed in such a way that NCDOT could accept maintenance of the road.

He requested the Board consider approving Resolution R21-06, which would recommend abandoning the old right of way associated with SR 1331 and request NCDOT accept the new right of way with the same SR 1331, locally known as Dr. Killian Drive.

Motion: Commissioner Woody moved to approve Resolution R21-06 Supporting the Abandonment and Addition of SR 1331, Dr. Killian Road, as presented. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(11) AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD: Carry over.

(12) CEMETERY BOARD: Commissioner Stribling requested Billie J. Bryson be reappointed. Commissioner Woody requested Randy Cabe be reappointed.

Motion: Commissioner Woody moved to reappoint Billie J. Bryson and Randy Cabe to additional four-year terms on the Cemetery Board, expiring February 02, 2025. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(13) PLANNING BOARD:

Motion: Commissioner Deitz moved to appoint Brian Barwatt to serve an unexpired term on the Planning Board, term expiring December 31, 2021. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(14) TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD: Carry over.

(15) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

(16) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: Commissioner Deitz moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel and G.S.143-318.11(a)(7) Criminal Investigations. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Chairman McMahan called the regular meeting back to order and stated that no action was taken in closed session except the approval of the minutes.

There being no further business, Commissioner Deitz moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman