

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
FEBRUARY 18, 2016**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on February 18, 2016, 6:00 p.m., Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman  
Mark Jones, Vice Chair  
Charles Elders, Commissioner  
Vicki Greene, Commissioner  
Boyce Deitz, Commissioner

Chuck Wooten, County Manager  
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board  
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

**(1) PROCLAMATION HONORING THADIOUS WAYNE HOOPER:**

Commissioner Greene read a Proclamation to pay tribute and honor to the memory of Thadious Wayne Hooper and to the legacy that he leaves behind of working for the betterment of the citizens of the county. Commissioners extended their sincere condolences and sympathy to the family of Wayne Hooper. Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**(2) AGENDA:** Chairman McMahan amended the agenda by adding an item for the Goodson Property. Commissioner Greene moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**(3) MINUTES:** Commissioner Elders moved to approve the minutes of a Joint Meeting with Municipalities of February 1, 2016 and a Regular Meeting of February 04, 2016. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**(4) COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

**(a)** Commissioner Deitz stated there had been a trash pick-up on Skyland Drive and he was very appreciative of that. He hoped they could come up with a plan to resolve the issue of trash on the roadways in the county. Also, Leo Cowan passed away over the past week. He was a pharmacist at Eastgate Pharmacy, very giving to families and a great citizen of the county.

**(b)** Commissioner Elders stated Leo Cowan was a fine man. He also hoped that the nice weather would be an incentive for more people to pick up trash.

**(c)** Commissioner Jones encouraged everyone to get out and vote for the NC Connect Bond on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**(d)** Commissioner Greene stated that at the Tourism Development Authority meeting on Wednesday, there was also a discussion about trash along the highways. She informed them that the Commissioners were working on a plan to address the issue.

**(5) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:** Mr. Wooten reported:

**(a) Trash along the roadways:** NCDOT entered into a contract with the company that mows the shoulders of the roads. Before each mowing they would pick up the trash on the main thoroughfares and a couple times in between when grass is not growing. They will primarily be picking up Highway 74, Highway 107 to East Laporte, Highway 116, Highway 441 and Skyland Drive. This is a great start to help solve the issue.

**(b) Firing Range:** The DEQ representative has changed resulting in delays for correcting the deficiencies at the firing range. The engineering firm employed by SCC is preparing the specification and soliciting bids for the work. As things now stand, SCC expects to have bids in hand within the next 30 days for the corrective action required to bring the firing range in compliance.

**(c) Damages to SCC (Balsam Building) from construction activities:** Discussions are continuing between SCC attorneys, NCDOT personnel, and representatives from the general contractor. The uncertainty of the financial viability of the general contractor for R5000 has delayed the potential settlement and corrective action.

**(d) Animal Shelter Stakeholders Forum:** The Health Director has extended an invitation to participate in a forum with the persons contracted to conduct a needs assessment for a new animal shelter. The meeting will take place at 7:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup> in the Cooperative Extension Conference Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Health Department Building.

**(e) Goodson Property Adjacent to old courthouse property:** The owner has notified the county that he has completed the tasks required in the contract and they were ready to set a closing date. Closing should occur on or before March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**(f) Tax Foreclosure Properties:** The upset bid period has passed for both properties and a closing date will be set to complete the sale of these properties. Following the advertising of these properties, there were a couple of inquiries; however, there were no official upset bids offered.

**(g) Upcoming Meetings:**

February 23<sup>rd</sup>: Smoky Mtn. Mental Health Commissioner/Manager Quarterly Meeting

February 24<sup>th</sup>: Reconvened Work Session at 1:00 p.m. in Room A227

March 3<sup>rd</sup>: Regular Commissioner Meeting

March 15<sup>th</sup>: Work Session – 10:00 a.m. – A227

March 17<sup>th</sup>: Regular Commissioner Meeting

**(h) 2015-16 Budget and Tax Survey:** The NCACC provided information that for the first time since the 2008, total county budgeted expenditures for 2015-16 exceed the amount budgeted in 2008-09. These expenditures have increased each year since a low of just under \$10 billion in 2011-12, and increased by almost 11% between 2014-15 and 2015-16. At \$11.06 billion, 2015-16 budgeted expenditures are slightly more than the \$11.01 billion reported in 2008-09.

**(i) Local Option Sales Tax Referenda:** In 2007 legislation passed by the N.C. General Assembly gave to counties a local-option, quarter-cent sales tax. The sales tax (G.S. 105-535) must be approved by voters in a referendum before it can be adopted by a county. For the period November 7, 2007, through November 4, 2014, 106 referendums on the quarter-cent sales tax were held in 66 counties. Of those 106, 29 were approved. Commissioners could consider this option when thinking about capital projects, especially as it relates to public schools and the community college. This would be a potential revenue source that could help off-set the need for increases in ad valorem tax.

**(6) PLANNING BOARD REPORT:** Michael Poston, Planning Director stated that the Planning Board continued to work on the Industrial Development Ordinance. Also, he was working to finalize a contract with Christy Carter for training opportunities for the planning board and the three planning councils.

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

**(8) CONSENT AGENDA:**

(a) Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the Finance Report for January, 2016 2015 and three Budget Ordinance Amendments for fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, for approval.

(b) Brandi Henson, Tax Collector, presented Tax Collector and Refund Reports for January, 2015, for approval.

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

**(9) GREEN ENERGY PARK:** Timm Muth, Director presented: The Environmental Benefits of the Green Energy Park:

(a) What is landfill gas:

- Methane 68%
- Carbon Dioxide 30%
- Trace Gases 2%

(b) Methane destruction and control:

- Gas destruction estimate
  - Typical Landfill Gas Flow: 40 cubic feet per minute (cfm)
  - Methane Content: 68%
  - Methane Gas Volume:  $40 \text{ cfm} \times 68\% = 27 \text{ cfm}$
  - Density of Methane: 0.0417 pounds/cubic foot (lbs/ft<sup>3</sup>)
  - Mass Flow Rate of Methane:  $27 \text{ cfm} \times 0.0417 \text{ lbs/ft}^3 = 1.126 \text{ lbs/min}$
- Total methane destruction = 56,223 lbs or 28 tons of methane yearly
- CO<sub>2</sub> offset (equivalent) = 1,405,575 lbs or 703 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> yearly

(c) Control of methane gas movement:

- Gas moves through gaps in waste mass and ground
- Sample probes around property allow monitoring and tracing of gas movement
- Methane levels at sample probe #3
  - 85% (almost pure methane) March, 1999
  - 0.1% (almost undetectable) April, 2014.
  - Reduction is a direct result of GEP's gas control efforts.

(d) Trace gas destruction:

- Issues
  - Three main contaminants of concern at Dillsboro landfill
    - Benzene, 1, 1 dichloroethene and 1, 4 dichlorobenzene
    - Poisonous cancer causing chemicals
  - Trace gas chemicals can move into groundwater and the Tuckasegee River
- Solution
  - Gases are drawn out with methane gas and condensate liquids
    - Industry standard method to destroy these chemicals
    - Burn at very high temperatures
    - Mix well with air
    - Keep gases in combustion chamber for at least one second
  - Exactly what happens in GEP's glass and metal-working equipment, with normal operating temperatures 2200 –2400°F.

(e) Control of trace gas movement:

- Monitoring of sample probes have typically shown a ten-fold decrease in contamination since 1999.
- Sample probe #3 – 1, 4 dichlorobenzene level
  - NC Water Quality Standard 6.0 micograms per liter
  - 2005 – 19
  - 2013 – 1.8

**(f) Waste wood as kiln fuel:**

- Info
  - GEP's wood-fired ceramics kiln supports classes at WCU and SCC along with area artists.
  - Fired using wood from waste trees removed by Public Works and others.
  - Typically pine and knotted wood not suitable for firewood.
  - No treated wood or other construction/demolition materials burned.
- Issues
  - Burning wood at typical woodstove temps (700 -1000°F) releases carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and soot particles.
  - Carbon monoxide and soot are harmful to human health.
  - Buried trees and wood scraps decompose and release methane gas.

**(g) Waste wood as kiln fuel:**

- Solution
  - GEP wood kiln burns extremely hot –over 2400°F.
  - Carbon monoxide and soot are thermally “cracked”, becoming more fuel.
  - Main emissions are CO<sub>2</sub> and water vapor.
  - Even the wood ash melts at 2200°F, creating unique glaze effects on pots.
  - Kiln creates minimal waste, ashes, and emissions.
  - Allows students and others to make beautiful, unique pottery.

**(h) Waste vegetable oil (WVO) as kiln fuel:**

- Info
  - Waste vegetable oil (WVO) is a common kitchen byproduct that's difficult to dispose of properly.
  - WVO contains nearly the same amount of energy as gasoline.
- Issues
  - Emptying WVO into drains damages sewer or septic.
  - WVO can kill pets or other animals if eaten in large amounts.
- Solution
  - GEP kiln designed with supplementary WVO burner.
  - WVO burns very cleanly when mixed well with air at high pressure.
  - Able to reach 2200°F in kiln's secondary chamber using WVO alone.
  - WVO donated by area restaurants and community members.
  - Over 750 gallons of WVO recycled to date.

**(i) Electricity vs. methane use:**

- Info
  - GEP glass furnace (holds large pot of molten glass) is electrically heated—using about \$850 per month, March -December.
  - Electric furnaces provide the best glass quality.
  - Furnace is extremely well insulated -only 250°F on the outside while it is 2050°F on the inside.
- Issues
  - Some question why a renewable energy park uses electricity.
  - Not enough landfill gas available to run furnace and other equipment.
  - Electric generation is very inefficient (30%) use of gas, so generating their own electricity doesn't make sense.
- Solutions
  - Recent upgrade added another 1,000 pounds of insulating cement to increase furnace's ability to hold heat.
  - GEP searching for outside grants to pay for solar panels that could help offset the electric use.

(j) Methane use:

- Info
  - Methane gas from the landfill provides fuel for:
    - two (2) glass gloryholes (working ovens)\*
    - three (3) blacksmith forges\*
    - a metal foundry\*
    - six (6) flame working torches\*
    - two (2) future ceramics kilns
  - Gas burns extremely hot –new high temperature of 2480°F in gloryhole #1.
  - Commercial glass studios spend \$1,000 -\$2,500 a month on propane.
  - The GEP and artists use landfill gas instead.
- Solutions: Ongoing upgrades will provide better gas system monitoring and recording capabilities.
  - \* Only such equipment in world using landfill gas

(k) Value of environmental benefits:

- Tuckasegee River is huge economic engine for the county. Fly fishing map, “Play On” campaign, rafting.
- Jackson County’s ongoing landfill gas collection efforts prevents chemicals and methane from polluting river and community.
- Haywood County is facing \$5 -\$7.5 million in environmental cleanup costs for Francis Farm landfill, with no methane collection system.
- Value of clean water for fishing, boating and other recreation activities: priceless.

Commissioner Jones requested they explore the idea of the county accepting cooking oil at all of the SRC locations and it be taken to the Green Energy Park for use.

Mr. Wooten stated that currently a subcontractor picked up the oil and disposed of it. The issue may be that the Green Energy Park can only store 750 gallons at a time and they have individuals and restaurants that take their cooking oil directly to them.

Commissioner Greene stated that according to a Smoky Mountain News article, Haywood County was going to have to spend millions to seal off the old Francis Farm landfill and they were also having to purchase about seven acres of adjacent property. This was going to be a huge financial burden for Haywood County.

Mr. Wooten stated that, unfortunately, all counties that had the unlined landfills, were experiencing the same type situations. The Dillsboro landfill was also unlined and they had been doing a number of activities every year and have an ongoing monitoring requirement.

*Informational item only.*

**(10) GOODSON PROPERTY:** Mr. Wooten stated that the county entered into a contract to purchase Goodson property on Keener Street, which is adjacent to the old courthouse, which is now the public library. A condition of the contract was that Mr. Goodson remove the roof and first floor of the existing house. The county’s due diligence included having the property surveyed and a title search. All of these items have taken place. Also, when an evaluation was done of the house, it was discovered that there were asbestos tiles in the basement and an underground oil storage tank. Mr. Goodson agreed to remove those two items at his expense. Mr. Goodson has completed his demolition and the asbestos tiles and underground tank have been removed as well. They were ready to move forward to complete the execution of the sale. The purchase price was \$75,000.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Greene moved to approve moving forward with purchase of the Goodson property for \$75,000. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(11) REGION A AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Helen Bryson to a three year term on the Region A Aging Advisory Council, term expiring March 3, 2018. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(12) JOINT COMMITTEE WITH HEALTH BOARD:** *Carry over.*

**(13) CULLOWHEE PLANNING COUNCIL:** *Carry over.*

**(14) PLANNING BOARD:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Greene moved to appoint Dickie Woodard as Vice Chair of the Planning Board, term expiring December 31, 2016. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(15) PRESS CONFERENCE:** None

**(16) CLOSED SESSION:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Greene moved that the Board go into closed session for two items pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

Chairman McMahan called the regular meeting back to order and stated no action was taken in closed session except the approval of the Closed Session Minutes of January 26<sup>th</sup>.

There being no further business, Commissioner Greene moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman