

**MINUTES OF A  
BUDGET WORK SESSION  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
MAY 23, 2023**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Work Session on May 23, 2023, 9:00 a.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Mark A. Letson, Chairman	Don Adams, County Manager
Todd Bryson, Vice Chair	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
Mark Jones, Commissioner (Via Zoom)	Darlene Fox, Finance Director
John W. Smith, Commissioner	
Tom Stribling, Commissioner (Via Speakerphone)	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

**(1) SHERIFF'S OFFICE:** Sheriff Doug Farmer; Shena Phillips, Executive Assistant to the Sheriff; Lieutenant Patrick McCoy; Lieutenant Tiffany Paul; and Detective David Lovedahl, were present for this item.

Sheriff Farmer stated he submitted the budget on behalf of the men and women of the Sheriff's Office. The budget addressed the needs for the 2023-2024 budget year by continuing efforts to improve employee retention and recruiting. Also, addressing needs for equipment and general funding for daily operations. Great care was taken to craft the budget to provide the citizens of the county with a professional and community driven Sheriff's Office that could be respected and trusted.

He summarized the budget request highlights:

**(a) Compensation: Holiday Pay:** In lieu of taking time off on holidays, deputies and detention officers work through the holidays to provide the necessary coverage of shifts. Call volumes frequently increase on holidays throughout the county. Other public safety agencies have addressed this by paying for holiday time in lieu of time off.

**(b) Personnel Request:**

- Title change from Senior Deputy to Corporal. No funding was necessary for this item.
- Four additional Road Patrol Deputy Sheriffs
- Two Road Patrol Lieutenants
- Two Drug Enforcement Deputies
- One Public Information Officer

Detective Lovedahl provided insight into the need for two Drug Enforcement Deputies.

General discussions were held.

Sheriff Farmer presented:

**(c) Non-Capital Line-Item Requests:**

- Salaries and wages overtime: \$10,000 increase
- Part-time salaries and wages: \$10,000 increase
- Pre-employment testing: \$2,000 increase
- Uniforms: \$10,000 increase
- Training/Ammo: \$3,685 increase

- Supplies/Materials: \$14,650 increase
  - Telephone/Postage: \$3,600 increase
  - Contracted Services: \$9,538 increase
- (d) Capital Outlay Requests:
- Radios: \$33,700 total request
  - Computers: \$51,100 total request
  - Fingerprint machine: \$22,375 total request
  - Drone remote: \$1,600 total request
  - Interview rooms video upgrade: \$10,200 total request
  - Vehicle painting/decal: \$60,000 total request
- (e) Capital Outlay – Motor Vehicles: 8 LE Vehicles: \$336,000 total request
- (f) Jail Budget Personnel Requests:
- One Detention Officer
  - Four reclassification from Detention to Detention Senior Officer
  - Reclassify all Detention Officers below Lieutenant
- (g) Jail Non-Capital Line Item Requests:
- Uniforms: \$3,000 increase
  - Miscellaneous supplies and materials: \$5,284 increase
  - Transportation prison/inmate: \$3,000 increase
  - Radios: \$8,400 total request
  - Computers: \$3,200 total request
  - Jail Transport van: awaiting quote
  - Detention facility maintenance: \$207,589.59 total request
- (h) Budget Amendment Compensation: Pay Adjustment Requests:
- Sheriff Doug Farmer: Grade 34 Step 12 to Grade 34 Step 18
  - Captain Bill Waldroup: Grade 27 Step 12 to Grade 27 Step 15
  - Captain Curtis Lambert: Grade 27 Step 12 to Grade 27 Step 15
  - Sergeant Detective Amber Wright: Grade 24 Step 12 to Grade 24 Step 15

General discussions were held.

*Informational item.*

Mr. Adams noted that five vehicles were not listed in the capital request. They purchased next year's vehicles that year because they came in early. Those five vehicles were for the additional personnel that were being recommended in the budget.

(2) **PUBLIC SCHOOLS**: Dr. Dana Ayers, Superintendent; Jacob Buchanan, Deputy Assistant Superintendent; and Kristie Walker, Finance Officer were present for this item.

Dr. Ayers presented: Budget Request 2023-2024:

(a) JCPS 2023 Accomplishments:

- New non-certified supplement of \$50
- No employees make less than \$15
- Student support positions funded through the County Commissioners

(b) JCPS School Mental Health Initiative (SMHI) Data 2022-23

- Tier 1 Core/Prevention 4,832
- Tier 2 Supplemental Intervention 4,054
- Tier 3 Intensive Intervention 4,414

(c) Proposed State Budget Highlights:

- Teachers:
  - Increase to the salary schedule
  - Raises the minimum beginning teacher’s salary
  - Restore Master’s Pay for classroom teachers
- Assistant Principals: Follows the teacher salary scale
- Principals:
  - Increase in salary schedule
  - Performance bonus reinstated
- Non-certified (Teacher Assistants, bus drivers, custodians) and Central office: Range in salary increase 5-10% over two years
- Benefit rates:
  - Retirement 23.94%
  - Health benefit \$7,654 per employee
- Retention bonus for all state employees
- A new additional minimum class size requirement for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> unfunded

(d) Requests:

- Provide funding for locally paid employees’ salary increase to the final state rate percentage. Historical salary increases have compressed salaries of non-certified personnel, causing newly hired and long-time employees to ear the same pay creating morale issues among staff.
- Provide funding for any state bonuses for locally paid staff.
- Provide funding for benefit rate changes that impact locally paid staff.
- Provide funding for mandates that impact the local budget that exceeded state funds.

(e) 2024 Funding Request:

- 2023 funding breakdown: 4% increase
- County funding: \$8,458,169.00
- Additional 5.4%: \$455,300.00
- 2023 total: \$8,913,469.00
- 4% increase: \$9,270,007.76
- Timber receipts: \$147,605.00
- 2024 request: \$9,417,612.76

(f) Proposed Budget:

<b><u>2023 JCPS Funding</u></b>		<b><u>2024 JCPS Request 4%</u></b>
\$6,918,092.00	Salaries	\$5,869,852.22
\$3,478,137.00	Operations	\$3,621,755.00
	Overflow from state allotments	\$500,000.00
\$10,396,229.00	Total	\$9,991,607.22
\$8,458,169.00	County Funding	\$9,270,007.76
\$141,928.00	Timber Receipts	\$141,928.00
\$1,340,832.00	JCPS Fund Balance	\$579,671.46
\$455,300.00	5.4% set aside	
	Co. Rev Total	\$9,411,935.76

Mr. Adams stated that the 5.4% or \$455,000 that was set aside last year, was before they knew what the state would do and if there would be additional ESSER Funds. Dr. Ayers did come back last year and stated they did need the \$455,000 and it was awarded to the school. What was projected to be used from fund balance was significantly less than what was budgeted.

Dr. Ayers stated the fund balance at the beginning of the year was \$3,300,000. That year, they were projecting to use between \$200,000 and \$300,000.

Mr. Adams stated that in looking at long-term planning for the schools moving forward, they were projecting to use approximately \$580,000 to balance their budget. This did encompass the 5.4% set aside. They would not know until the end of the year, but the overall goal would be to stop utilizing fund balance. The other part of the conversation was about the ESSER Funds.

Dr. Ayers stated that ESSER II Funds would run out in September, 2023 and ESSER III Funds would run by the end of the 2024 school year, which was when they would experience the ESSER cliff.

Mr. Adams stated that if they were fortunate, they would not use the 4% increase in fund balance. When they started dealing with the cliff, they would need to use a combination of fund balance to ease into the next set of funding. This would allow them to have the conversation about the cliff, which the School Board was making adjustments for. They were hopeful with this, that next year the School Board would not request a large number to offset the cliff.

General discussions were held.

Dr. Ayers presented:

(g) Employer Benefit Costs:

<b>Fiscal year</b>	<b>Social Security %</b>	<b>Retirement %</b>	<b>Health Insurance</b>
2023	7.65	24.19	\$7,397
2022	7.65	22.89	\$7,019
2021	7.65	21.68	\$6,326
2020	7.65	19.7	\$6,306
2019	7.65	18.86	\$6,104
2018	7.65	17.13	\$5,869
2017	7.65	16.33	\$5,659
2016	7.65	15.32	\$5,471

(h) Looking ahead: ROTC Reserve Officers Training Corps

- 2024 Establishing Cost \$250,000
- Reoccurring Program Costs \$150,000
- Interested in the JROTC Program 136 responses
  - 40.4% maybe learn more about JROTC
  - 44.1% No
  - 15.4% Yes

Mr. Adams noted that the recommended budget included \$130,000 for the master planning process. During the Board of Commissioners' Budget Retreat, it was concluded that a master plan was needed for athletic fields; a more in depth conceptual plan and information for the middle school; and the impact a middle school would have on the other school operations.

*Informational item.*

(3) **SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**: Dr. Don Tomas, SCC President and Lisa Kim Fisher, SCC CFO, were present for this item.

Dr. Tomas provided a general information packet to the Board about SCC and presented:

(a) Objective:

- Outline SCC's budgetary and capital needs
- Demonstrate the value of SCC to the county and region
- Illustrate the SCC ROI

- (b) Assumptions affecting the 2023-2024 Budget:**
  - Proposed salary increase for FY23/24 for 4.25% and increase in associated benefits
  - Facility Coalition Assessment Program highlighted life and safety and ADA building compliance items.
  - Addressing Deferred Maintenance.
  - Property insurance increase due to AE flood plain premium.
- (c) Operating Expenses:**
  - 20-21: \$2,092,289
  - 21-22: \$2,411,172
  - 22-23: \$2,454,382
  - 23-24: \$2,822,847
  - The college maintained 7.3% increase in operating requests on average over the past three years.
- (d) Operating Expense Detail:**
  - Management Operations, Salary and Benefits:
    - Budget FY 22-23: \$1,511,320
    - Budget FY 23-24: \$1,720,347
  - Utilities and Supplies:
    - Budget FY 22-23: \$656,862
    - Budget FY 23-24: \$766,500
  - Insurance:
    - Budget FY 22-23: \$142,500
    - Budget FY 23-24: \$175,500
  - Software, Maintenance and General Expenses:
    - Budget FY 22-23: \$143,700
    - Budget FY 23-24: \$160,500
  - Total:
    - Budget FY 22-23: \$2,454,382
    - Budget FY 23-24: \$2,822,847
- (e) Capital Requests:**
  - 20-21: \$349,126
  - 21-22: \$299,781
  - 22-23: \$398,313
  - 23-24: \$820,600
- (f) Capital Request Detail:**
  - Roofs (Myers Auditorium, Bradford Hall): \$295,550
  - Fire Alarm upgrades: \$154,850
  - Automobiles (maintenance and motorpool): \$87,000
  - HVAC – 4 units: \$55,100
  - ADA compliance: \$42,000
  - Egress and exit discharge lights: \$25,600
  - Lighting replacements: \$10,000
  - Maintenance ship and receiving motorized door and exhaust fan: \$14,500
  - Leaf vac – grounds: \$25,000
  - Windows – Balsam: \$1,000
  - Carpet – Oaks Hall: \$9,000
  - JCEC safety wall: \$50,000
  - Other Capital Outlay – incidental capital: \$51,000
  - Total: \$820,600

(g) Summary of Total Requests:

- 18-19: \$2,708,023
- 19-20: \$2,482,202
- 20-21: \$2,441,415
- 21-22: \$2,710,953
- 22-23: \$2,932,695
- 23-24: \$3,646,447

General discussions were held.

*Informational item.*

Mr. Adams presented the Board with the actual annual allocations for SCC Operations. Recommended in the budget was the Life Safety of \$154,850, plus the \$50,000 for other. SCC was behind on the last couple of years of their capital implementation and funds had not been expended. The concept was to make sure to deal with Life Safety and to catch up with the other projects they were working on.

(4) **LIBRARY**: Tracy Fitzmaurice, Librarian, presented: Public Libraries Report for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024:

(a) Fontana Regional Library's new FY2022-2027 Plan was introduced in September, 2022. Development of the plan was funded by a Planning for Sustainability grant under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). They utilized the Triple Bottom Line methodology as the framework for this planning process. TBL relied on three measures of organizational and community sustainability: social, economic and environmental. In the library context, these measures of sustainability refer to an intentional alignment of a library's core values and resources, including staff time and energy, facilities, collections and technology.

(b) Goal 1: Digital Inclusion: To open the digital world to everyone in the community. Thanks to the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and the State Library of North Carolina, FRL received a grant for \$106,000, which enabled them to hire two Digital Navigators. Since hiring the navigators the libraries in had been able to expand help to community members caught in the digital divide.

(c) Goal 2: Health and Wellness: To assure that everyone in the community would have access to resources and services in order to make the best decisions to maintain and improve health and wellness.

- The libraries work closely with the Health Department to support countywide health goals.
- JCPL and ACCCL's new Active Audio Challenge runs from March 1st to May 31st.
- Mission Children's Hospital requested that the libraries add the Dexcom program to the public computers. Dexcom allows people to record their glucose numbers, which could be reviewed by medical personnel.
- May was Mental Health Awareness Month. ACCCL partnered with The Counseling Center and Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation on the Bee Kind initiative. They would provide books and resources on mental health with the goal of helping to destigmatize mental and behavioral health in the area and invite the whole community to seek support as needed.

(d) Goal 3: Education: To provide information, resources and services, which support opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone in the community.

- StudentAccess was a free project that allows students in the county to access Fontana Regional Library print and electronic resources using their school ID, without needing to visit their local library to set up an account.
- Youth Services staff offer outreach to many daycares and classrooms across the county.

(e) Goal 4: Work and Economy: To help assure that all residents would be able to find and secure employment and to navigate their financial world.

- FRL offers free access to Universal Class, a database that provides online continuing education courses. The course catalog includes over 600 online classes from a wide array of disciplines and Universal Class was accredited by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training.
- EBSCO LearningExpress was a career preparation site where library users could prepare for tests in their field of interested.

**(f) Goal 5: Affordable Living:** To provide information, resources and services that support residents’ efforts to achieve stable living conditions, which were healthy, comfortable and enable them to participate in and enjoy life events.

- JCPL and ACCCL were partnering with the NC cooperative extension to teach people how to container garden.

**(g) Goal 6: Recreation and Leisure:** To provide the community with engaging activities and resources, which increase quality of life and promote a sense of joy.

- JCPL continued to partner with WCU to offer programs.
- Scheduled summer children and adult programming.

**(h) Goal 7: Staff Support:** To create an environment that equitably supports the needs and aspirations of a satisfied workforce.

- In order for staff to feel confident in their jobs and serve the public well they were encouraged to take classes to learn new skills or brush-up skills they already have.

**(i) Goal 8: Operational Excellence:** To maintain and constantly improve the economic wellbeing and managerial operations of each library and the regional organization.

**(j) Updated NC Cardinal Map:** The NC Cardinal consortium now included 50 library systems across 62 counties. There were 218 physical branches with a combined 7.8 million items in the catalog. Last fiscal year Jackson County libraries shipped 10,199 items to other libraries across NC and borrowed 6,039 items. Between the three counties of FRL, Jackson libraries loaned out 16,571 items and borrowed 16512 items.

**(k) Statistics:** FRL’s key statistics comparing eight months in FY2021-2022 to the same eight months in FY2022-2023. These numbers were reported to the State Library of North Carolina in the annual Public Library Survey in September:

<u>Measure</u>	<u>7/1/21-2/28/22</u>	<u>7/1/22-2/28/23</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Book circulation	163,262	167,598	2.7%
Non-print circulation	24,784	37,720	52.0%
Number of library programs	682	965	41.0%
Attendance at library progs.	7,318	12,215	67.0%
Number of non-lib. progs.	4,112	4,754	15.6%
Attendance non-lib. progs.	12,074	14,121	17.0%
Wi-Fi Sessions	126,962	148,499	17.0%
Door Count	154,935	202,506	30.7%

**(l) Goal 9: Environmental Sustainability:** To develop and maintain policies and practices, which help to create a cleaner and safer environment and to develop information and educational opportunities encouraging others to do so.

- The IT crew were replacing all of the public computers.

**(m) Fine Free Status:** They were aiming to join the Fine Free Libraries. She provided a map showing Fine Free counties currently in North Carolina. The amount of time and resources spent collecting fines did not balance out the amount of the revenues from fees.

General discussions were held.

*Informational item.*

At 11:38 a.m., the Board recessed for lunch.

At 12:34 p.m., Chairman Letson called the meeting back to order.

(5) **AWAKE**: Crystal Jones, Executive Director, provided an overview of services provided by AWAKE. Some of the services provided included: Forensic Interviews of children that had been physically and sexually abused and severely neglected in the county; Child Medical Evaluations; Agent Advocacy; Mental Health Counselling for children and families; and Court Support for child abuse victims.

They served children from the ages of 0 to 18 and developmentally delayed adults. All services were provided at no cost to families. They partnered with many other organizations, nonprofits and schools in the county to provide resources. Funds provided by the county helped AWAKE provide food, clothing and transportation immediately to families for victim support. They were appreciative of the county's ongoing support.

*Informational item.*

(6) **H.E.R.E.**: Gretta Worley, Executive Director and Dr. Marilyn Chamberlin, Board President, were present for this item.

Ms. Worley stated that HERE was an acronym for Housing, Equity, Resources and Education. She provided an overview of the program. It was estimated that the county had between 175-200 people that lived in a shelter or were considered homeless. HERE's funding only allowed for Code Purple, which was when the temperature was 32 degrees or below and for the Emergency Shelter through the winter months.

HERE, provided housing and other services, such as transportation, medication, phone, food, laundry, etc. They partnered with several other nonprofit organizations in the county. Investment in the most vulnerable citizens was not only the right thing to do, but was also a sound, economic decision. By supporting an initiative to help alleviate homelessness, they could reduce the burden on the health care system, decrease crime rates and improve the quality of life for everyone in the community.

Dr. Chamberlin stated that the 30-day shelter was for people at great risk. They could stay at the shelter for 30 days while they worked with them to find a permanent housing solution. They served 15 adults and 11 children from October to April in the 30-day shelter. With Code Purple, they served 87 people, 10 of which were children. They worked with them also to find permanent housing. Overall, they served 92 adults and 21 children in the shelter. She thanked the county for the continued support.

*Informational item.*

(7) **WEST BRIDGE VOCATIONAL**: Joe Rigdon, Chief Executive Officer, provided the history and general information for West Bridge Vocational. Their mission was to provide job training skills and job opportunities for individuals that had a barrier to employment. They also provided a manufacturing setting in their facility that funded their efforts. About 70% of the revenue generated went to support the programs.

He gave an overview of a few of their programs. Project Search was a collaborative effort for individuals 18-25 that were significantly disabled. They followed the SCC school year going through three rotations. When they graduated from the program, his staff helped them find jobs. The Pre-Employment Transition Services Program was in schools in Jackson, Swain, Macon and Cherokee. They provided services to 90 children that year to help them with job training skills.

They also launched a new program, Bridge to Work, which was geared for individuals that may not qualify for the other programs. Also, they secured grant funding from Dogwood in the amount of \$628,000 for machinery, equipment, new contracts and training for employees. He invited the Commissioners out to take a tour of the facility.

*Informational item.*



**(8) WNC COMMUNITIES:** Jennifer Ferre, Executive Director, provided a history of the organization. Their mission was to empower the people of Western North Carolina to cultivate vitality and prosperity in the mountain communities. They collaborated with other organizations and provided agriculture opportunities. All of their efforts went to improving rural community life with a positive impact on forestry and agriculture.

Community Clubs and Organizations were the heart and backbone of the underserved in rural communities. Through these clubs and organizations, they were able to get support directly to these communities. This was a voluntary program the communities were invited to participate in. Also, they offered scholarship opportunities to students who participated in their communities through the Honors Program. They also supported the agricultural community through the Beef Cattle Commission. They provided many regional and county programs vital to the area and county.

They were committed to creating lasting positive economic and social outcomes for people in the communities. They were focused on building relationships and working with other organizations. She thanked the Board for their support of WNC Communities over the years that helped sustain their organizations.

*Informational item.*

**(9) FARMERS MARKET:** John Bubacz, President, stated the Farmers Market was a 23-year old institution feeding people in the county and providing an opportunity for producers in the county and adjacent counties to make money. They appreciated the funding from the county for the past two years. They were a volunteer organization except the manager that was paid partially by fundraising. The Farmers Market met every Saturday at Bridge Park in Sylva.

*Informational item.*

**(10) ROLLING START:** Cliff Faull, Director, stated they were a nonprofit starting their fifth year in the county. Their mission was to accept donated vehicles and then refurbish them to be safe, reliable, presentable vehicles. Then the vehicle was gifted, at no cost, to local individuals who were in financial need.

In five years, they have gifted 56 vehicles. In the past year, they gifted 11 vehicles to Jackson County residents. They also worked with other local nonprofits and agencies to identify and vet applicants. In the coming year, they planned to move into a leased garage space and hire a part-time mechanic.

*Informational item.*

**(11) UNITED CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES:** Joyce Pope, Director of Outreach, provided a history of the organization. They provided a food pantry and financial assistance to county residents with the purpose of keeping them fed with nutritious food and keeping them in safe and healthy housing.

They were 100% funded by donations and grants. 20% of the kids in the county were in food insecure homes. They helped over 6,000 families every year. Last year, they paid out of \$105,000 in financial assistance and gave out over 128,000 pounds of food to families. They partnered with other nonprofit agencies and organizations in the county. They appreciated the county's ongoing support.

*Informational item.*

**(12) CENTER FOR DOMESTIC PEACE:** Wesley Myers, Executive Director, stated their mission was to end interpersonal violence through prevention, intervention and educational services. They were working to advocate for and provide direct services to survivors of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault and human trafficking. In 2022, Center for Domestic Peace served 397 clients and were expecting to serve 570 clients in 2023.

They provided a Healthy Relationships Curriculum for 1,090 of the county public school students that year. They also started the Peace Collaborative Program, which was a space as a resource wall for people that needed services, a closet with household cleaning materials and regular workshops.

Staff operated a 24/7 Crisis Line that connected with a person in the county, who knew the resources, to help clients. Their volunteer advocates provided 1,625 hours of support for the program in 2022. They used the assistance of the grant from the county to provide direct services for victims. They appreciated the county's consideration.

*Informational item.*

**(13) CIRCLES OF HOPE:** Pastor Blake Daniel, Pastor First Presbyterian Church and Chairman of Circles of Jackson County and Rachel Byrd, Client Services Coordinator, were present for this item.

Pastor Daniel stated the mission of Circles was to provide short and long-term support that would enable individuals and families to move into self-sustainability. They did this through education, employment readiness assistance and a creation of community support systems. Their ultimate goal was to reduce the number of families in poverty in the county by 10%. Their two-step process was a 21-month commitment.

Ms. Byrd stated that about 18% of the county lived below the poverty line with a per capita income of approximately \$26,000 compared to the national average of \$46,000. The unemployment rate was 5.3%. People who participate in Circles, have an average increase of income of 51% after 18 months in the program.

As a nonprofit organization, they were fully funded by grants and donations. They requested \$20,000 for operating costs and for three staff, which enabled them to provide crucial resources, guidance and opportunities for individuals to reach self-sufficiency. She thanked the community and county for continued support.

*Informational item.*

**(14) CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:** Julie Donaldson, Executive Director, provided a video to familiarize the Board with the work of the Chamber. She noted that Highway 107 was another project they worked on. Through the county and EDC, the Chamber had been providing grant funding to businesses that were being relocated on Highway 107. They had given 17 grants to date and made visits with them weekly.

They also maintained a list of larger, affordable apartments and townhomes in the area for new employees coming into the area. They worked with Mountain West and other area Chambers. There would be 76 people in the county impacted by the Evergreen Mill closure. The Chamber was also involved in the June 16<sup>th</sup> hiring event at Haywood County Fairgrounds.

She also announced products available at the Chamber including, cups, t-shirts, jams, honey and the courthouse ornament. She also noted the Fly Fishing Trail that had been in place for 15 years. Concerts on the Creek would begin May 26<sup>th</sup>.

*Informational item.*

The Board took a five-minute break.

Chairman Letson called the meeting back to order.

**(15) WATERSHED ASSOCIATION TUCK RIVER:** Ken Brown, Executive Director, provided a grant proposal and a report on local fishing. There was an outbreak of Didymo and he was working with the North Carolina Division of Water Quality to work out a strategy to address the issue to lessen the impacts.

Also, they worked with partners on a grant to submit to Southwestern Commission to determine sources of elevated counts fecal coli in two specific watersheds in the county. WATR was also involved in a restoration project and were writing grants for other parts of the watershed.

*Informational item.*

**(16) CHRISTMAS CONNECTION:** Brian Chamberlin, stated they were an independent 5013c organization. Their mission was to provide children and families that were either on food assistance or the children were on Medicaid with \$75 worth of items for Christmas. For some kids, this was the only thing they received. At that time, the poverty level in the county was about 30% for children.

They worked with several agencies, schools and nonprofits in the county. They were an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff and had very little overhead. They strived for more community outreach and were trying to expand their board. Last year, they served 585 kids encompassing 220 families. They knew there were more that needed assistance. They also helped families in times of emergency situations.

*Informational item.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark A. Letson, Chairman