

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
AUGUST 15, 2023**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on August 15, 2023, 6:30 p.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	John Kubis, Interim County Attorney
Mark Jones, Commissioner	Representative (Via Zoom)
John W. Smith, Commissioner (Via Zoom)	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
Tom Stribling, Commissioner	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

(1) **PROCLAMATION: OPIOID AWARENESS MONTH**: Chairman Letson read a Proclamation declaring September as Opioid Awareness Month. Commissioner Stribling moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Anna Lippard, Deputy Health Director, was present to accept the proclamation.

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

(3) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the minutes of a Regular Meeting of August 01, 2023. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

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

(5) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**: Commissioner Stribling reported he attended the Board of Health meeting that week and learned a lot. He was looking forward to working with them more in the future.

(6) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT**: None.

(7) **INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC**:

(a) Claire Clark voiced disapproval of the Sheriff's Office during an incident at an event hosted by Sylva Pride held at the Library in Sylva. They requested the Board condemn actions at the event and called for Sheriff Farmer to work to restore trust and apologize to organizers and attendees of the event.

(b) Nathan Mann voiced disapproval of the Sheriff's Office during an incident at an event hosted by Sylva Pride held at the Library in Sylva. The Sheriff's Department was providing the minimum amount of protection because the space was rented.

(c) Sarah DeArmon voiced disapproval of the Sheriff's Office during an incident at an event hosted by Sylva Pride held at the Library in Sylva. They asked for Law Enforcement to be held accountable and to apologize to the LGBT community. She called on the County Commissioners to make a statement in support of the LGBT community and against hatred.

(d) Keith Blaine of Sylva recommended Dr. CY Wang to the Southwestern Community College Board of Trustees. Also, the Fontana Regional Library Board Agreement was last signed December 12, 2012. Policy making should be moved to the lower boards by county and appointments should be made by the Commissioners.

**(8) CONSENT AGENDA:**

(a) Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the Finance Report for July, 2023 and two Budget Ordinance Amendments for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, for approval.

(b) Brandi Henson, Tax Collector, presented the Tax Collector and Refund Reports for July, 2023, for approval.

(c) Ms. Henson presented the Tax Settlement Report for February 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 for approval.

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

**(9) MEDICAID EXPANSION:** Cris Weatherford, Department of Social Services Director, presented a proposal for the funding DSS would receive from the state as a part of the Medicaid Expansion Bill that was passed and signed by the Governor in March. The funding was included to help with the startup costs of expansion.

DSS Medicaid Expansion Funding:

**(a) Revenue:**

- NCDHHS CCU Funding one-time equipment \$ 46,614.93
- E&E Gap \$131,688.33 or \$26,337.67 per month \$ 26,337.67

**(b) Expense:**

- Salary Expense:
  - 4 Income Maintenance Caseworkers \$229,266.32
  - 1 Income Maintenance Caseworker Supervisor II \$ 66,449.86
  - Total \$295,716.18
  - Monthly Salary Expense \$ 24,643.02
- Equipment/Offices \$ 43,785.00

Mr. Weatherford stated at some point, when the federal funding ran out, the county would absorb the 25% cost of the positions.

Mr. Adams stated this item was on the agenda so Mr. Weatherford could move forward with advertising for these positions. It would be a value to approve these positions to allow Mr. Weatherford to advertise with the understanding they could not be hired until the state budget was passed and the funds became available.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Jones moved to approve the request to proceed forward with the positions, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(10) ANIMAL CONTROL POSITION:** Shelley Carraway, Health Director, stated in the FY23-24 Budget, the Health Department was approved for one new position for Animal Control. The new position was classified as an Animal Shelter Attendant, but this job position limited what that person could do. She requested to reclassify the position to an Animal Control Officer Trainee to enable this person to be available for on-call duty after hours and weekends. The two positions were the same grade, so no additional funds were requested.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Bryson moved to approve reclassifying the Animal Control Attendant position to Animal Control Officer, as requested. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(11) TRANSIT 5311, 5310, CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRAM GRANTS PUBLIC**

**HEARING:** April Alm, Transit Director, requested to hold a public hearing for the FY25 Community Transportation Program Grant Applications on September 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:25 p.m. One public hearing was acceptable for all three Community Transportation Program Grant Applications. As the applicant, Jackson County Transit would seek permission to apply for the Public Transportation Program funding, enter into an agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, provide the necessary assurances and the required local match.

The 5311 Administrative grant program helped subsidize the administrative costs of running a transportation system, which included administrative salaries and benefits, as well as office supplies, uniforms, training and marketing. The 5310 Operating grant program supported transportation operating costs for the elderly and individuals with disabilities.

The Combined Capital grant program allowed Community Transportation systems the opportunity to apply for funding to maintain a public transportation system fleet and other capital needs. This capital project consisted of three replacement vehicles (one Raised Roof with lift and two minivan/crossover vehicles); lettering and logos for each vehicle; one propane conversion; and a 6 camera IP Camera Surveillance System. All vehicles and surveillance equipment were being requested due to having met the end of their useful life and met the minimum requirements for replacement with NCDOT IMD.

She requested to set a public hearing on September 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:25 p.m.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Jones moved to set a public hearing on September 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:25 p.m. for Transit 5310, 5311 and Capital Projects Program Grants. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(12) PERMITTING SOFTWARE CONTRACT:**

Mr. Adams presented the final legal version of the contract with Tyler Technologies, Inc. Changes made to the contract were as follows:

- (a) Page 5, Section 9. Data Breach and Cyber Attacks.
- (b) Page 11, Section G-6 Insurance and Indemnification.

The packet presented did not include attachments. He requested the item to be carried over to the September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

*Carry over.*

**(13) NCACC ANNUAL CONFERENCE VOTING DELEGATE:**

Mr. Adams stated the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners 116<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference would be August 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>. The business meeting would be held on Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>. The Board would need to designate a Voting Delegate.

***Motion:*** Commissioner Stribling moved to appoint Chairman Letson to serve as the Voting Delegate. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(14) FONTANA REGIONAL LIBRARY AGREEMENT – 10 YEAR REVIEW:**

Mr. Adams presented the current Fontana Regional Library Agreement with attachments. The Agreement referred to two leases for the facilities the county leased to Fontana Regional Library located in Cashiers and Sylva. This was a ten-year agreement that automatically renewed every ten years.

The Fontana Regional Library Agreement between Macon, Jackson and Swain Counties required a review of the agreement every 10 years. The Macon, Jackson and Swain Managers met on July 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss what areas could be improved upon. The three Managers felt the Fontana Library System had positively affected all counties within its membership through providing citizens with convenient access to informational and educational resources for over 75 years.

They further agreed that the multi-county collaboration was the most efficient and effective way to continue providing library services as it provided opportunities for service and resource allocations beyond the financial service capacities of the individual county governments and libraries. While the Regional Library Agreement worked well to govern the multi-county library system for the past decade, they were in agreement that the existing agreement could be improved to increase communication and coordination between local government units and the Fontana Regional Library System.

The revision they felt would be most beneficial to all the citizens was to move appointment authority for the Fontana Regional Library Board of Trustees from the local county library boards to the Boards of Commissioners of each county. They believed this direct connection between local governments responsible for creating and funding the multi-county library system and the policymaking body for that system would be more reflective of the elected bodies, improve communications and make the services more responsive to all citizens.

In the event all three County Boards and the Fontana Regional Library agreed with the proposed change to the appointment process, they would make the revision to the Regional Agreement. Moving forward, the new appointment process would be used to fill all seats on the Fontana Regional Library Board of Trustees as they became vacant.

Commissioner Smith stated he thought they needed further discussions and study on this before they moved in support. He requested to table this item until another meeting.

Commissioner Stribling stated he agreed.

Commissioner Bryson stated he agreed.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Stribling moved to table this item for further review. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(15) HUMAN SERVICES CONSOLIDATION:** Mr. Adams stated this issue was brought up several months ago by this Board. At that time, the Board chose not to move forward with continuing conversations regarding consolidating the Department of Social Services and the Health Department. Since that time, he had talked individually with Board Members and there had been a desire to bring this issue back up for discussion.

This was not a new conversation for the county. Several years ago, the School of Government came in and presented information to the Board of Commissioners and the boards. Currently, the county had a separate Health Board that provided oversight to the Health Department operations and hired/fired the Health Director. The Health Director had their statutory duties as well.

The county also had a separate DSS Board that provided oversight to the Department of Social Services operations and hired/fired the DSS Director. The DSS Director had their statutory duties as well. The discussion would be if the Board wished to move forward with some type of consolidation. He provided the following information:

(a) NCGS 153A-77: Authority of boards of commissioners over commissions, boards, agencies, etc.

(b) Options Under “New” Law:

- #1: Board of Commissioners to become the Department of Social Services and/or the Health Department.
  - Departments not consolidated
  - BOCC assumes powers and duties of board(s) after public hearing with a minimum 30-day notice
  - BOCC appoints department directors
  - If public health affected, must appoint health advisory committee
  - Employees subject SHRA

- #2: Board of Commissioners create a consolidated Human Services Board and then a Consolidated Human Services Agency.
  - BOCC creates CHSA and appoints CHS board
  - Manager appoints CHS director with advice and consent of CHS board
  - CHS director appoints person with health director qualifications
  - SHRA option
- #3: Board of Commissioners becomes the Consolidated Human Services Board and then has a Consolidated Human Services Agency.
  - BOCC creates CHSA and assumes powers and duties of CHS board after public hearing
  - Manager appoints CHS director with advice and consent of BOCC acting as CHS board
  - CHS director appoints person with health director qualifications
  - SHRA option
  - If agency includes PH, must appoint health advisory committee
- #4: Remain in the current status. This would keep the Department of Social Services Board and the Health Board. These boards provided oversight for the Department of Social Services and the Health Department.

Commissioner Smith stated he preferred Option #3. No one would lose their job. It would give the county more flexibility on salaries and those type things if they pulled them into the County's HR instead of using the State HR. It would give them flexibility to put people in positions they were having trouble filling. To some extent, they could consolidate services. He had talked to other counties and Option #3 was how they had done this.

Commissioner Jones stated he still did not understand the true benefit of consolidation. Was it financial benefit or more control under personnel? He still had the same opinion he had when they discussed this earlier and ten years ago when it was brought up. He preferred Option #4 to remain in the current status.

Commissioner Bryson asked if all three options would have an advisory board?

Mr. Adams stated yes, if the Board of Commissioners was acting as the Health Board, an advisory board was required.

Commissioner Bryson stated essentially, if they moved forward with any of the options, no one would be affected. He was open to moving this to a public hearing to hear what the public had to say and go from there.

***Motion:** Commissioner Bryson moved to proceed forward with a public hearing for Human Services Consolidation. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion passed by a vote of 4-1 with Commissioner Jones voting "nay".*

Mr. Adams stated the public hearing required a 30-day notice, so it would be held in the beginning of October.

General discussions were held.

**(16) SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** Carry over.

**(17) PRESS CONFERENCE:** None.

**(18) CLOSED SESSION:**

**Motion:** *Commissioner Stribling moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

Chairman Letson called the regular meeting back to order and stated no action was taken in closed session.

There being no further business, Commissioner Stribling moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

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Mark A. Letson, Chairman