

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
SEPTEMBER 17, 2024**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on September 17, 2024, 6:30 p.m., Albert Carlton 249 Frank Allen Road, Cashiers, North Carolina.

Present: Mark A. Letson, Chairman	Kevin King, County Manager
Todd Bryson, Vice Chair	John Kubis, County Attorney (Via Zoom)
Mark Jones, Commissioner	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
John W. Smith, Commissioner	
Tom Stribling, Commissioner	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

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

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Stribling moved to approve the minutes a Regular Meeting of September 03, 2024 and a Work Session of September 03, 2024. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman Letson stated they were holding the meeting at the Albert Carlton Library and it was awesome to be there. He thanked county staff for coming out and working hard.

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**: Commissioner Jones stated at the last meeting, the Board voted to move forward with the grant match for a traditional middle, if the school was awarded the grant. There were comments from the public regarding needs of Blue Ridge School, Fairview and other schools. Part of his delay in voting was being torn between building something new and fixing what they had. Mr. King and Ms. Fox were working on a financial package for the approved projects and to assist the schools, particularly Blue Ridge and Fairview, with funding for all their needs.

(5) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT**: Mr. King reported on county construction projects:

(a) **Recreation Center Aquatics Complex**: The project should be completed by October. The county would be recouping liquidated damages under the contract terms.

(b) **Center for Domestic Peace**: The sub-footers had been installed along with all stormwater drainage infrastructure. Foundation, rough-in plumbing, electrical and other utilities were being prepped for the building pad.

(c) **Cashiers Splash Pad**: Bidding was underway with a bid opening on October 25th.

(d) **Whittier-Qualla Park**: Bidding was underway with a bid opening on October 25th.

(e) **Department on Aging**: The study had been completed and they had the documents to develop a scope of work. The project would be bid by October 15th.

(f) **Canada Fire Department and Community Center**: The plan for the department had been presented to the Board for review. County staff was working on a funding plan and continuing additional plan modifications.

(g) **Justice Center and Administration Building**: The plan had been presented to the Board and county staff was in the process of fund development.

(h) **Fairgrounds**: A phased approach for the fairground facility was being developed, consisting of a 160' x 250' (40,000 SF) open air pavilion and a 100' x 200' (20,000 SF) enclosed arena. The existing facility would be utilized for additional future development. They were engaging civil, mechanical and electrical engineering for stormwater and parking, HVAC and electrical plans. They were also assessing the water tank.

(i) **Greenway**: Over the last year, several properties had been purchased to extend the Greenway. Property acquisition and fund development would continue to extend the Greenway footprint. They were also exploring future Greenway initiatives in other areas of the county.

(j) **NCDOT Shared Use Path Cullowhee Recreation Highway**: NCDOT Commission voted on the 80% state funded project. The county match was estimated at \$417,440.

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

(7) **CONSENT AGENDA**:

(a) Darlene Fox, Finance Director (via Zoom) presented the Finance Report for August 2024 for approval.

(b) Brandi Henson, Tax Collector (via Zoom) presented the Tax Collector and Refund Reports for August 2024 for approval.

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

(8) **RETIREE INSURANCE PLAN**: Mr. King stated this item was discussed at the work session. He presented the amended Retiree Health Benefits Policy with the following revisions:

(a) Retiree Insurance Plan Benefits

Eligible retirees of Jackson County hired before January 1, 2025 will receive these benefits:

- County-paid medical and prescription coverage (health insurance)
- Dental insurance coverage
- Telehealth benefits

Eligible retirees of Jackson County hired after January 1, 2025, will receive these benefits until the retiree reaches age 65:

- County paid medical and prescription coverage (health insurance)

(b) County Commissioners who have served three terms or 12 years for Jackson County:

- 1. Eligible Commissioners must be currently fulfilling their term in office at the time of retirement.
- 2. Prior terms (years) of service as a Jackson County Commissioner will be credited toward the required 12 years of service.

(c) The plan would be effective upon adoption.

Motion: *Commissioner Stribling moved to approve the updated Retiree Insurance Plan, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) **ABC RESOLUTION R24-09**:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to Table the item. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) 5311, 5310, OPERATING AND COMBINED CAPITAL COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION GRANTS – RESOLUTION R24-10:

April Alm, Transit Director, stated the FY26 Community Transportation Program Grant Application Public Hearing was held prior to the meeting. One public hearing was acceptable for all four Community Transportation Program Grant Applications. As the applicant, 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 to 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 two replacement vehicles (two Raised Roof vans with lifts), lettering and logos for each vehicle and two propane conversions. Also, included was a replacement repeater for radio communication. All vehicles and equipment were being requested due to having met the end of their useful life and meet the minimum requirements for replacement with NCDOT IMD.

The Non-STI Rural Expansion Vehicle Program supported rural systems interested in applying for expansion vehicles. The opportunity for funding requests made through the program would only be considered after all Combined Capital funding requests. Transit would request to apply for one expansion Raised Roof van with lift, lettering and logos and one propane conversion.

Total estimated amount requested for the period July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>	<u>Local Share</u>
Administrative	\$212,321	\$31,849 (15%)
Combined Capital	\$241,200	\$24,120 (10%)
5310 Operating	\$165,000	\$82,500 (50%)
Non-STI Rural Expansion Vehicle	\$117,956	\$23,592 (20%)
TOTAL PROJECT	\$736,477	\$162,061

A public hearing was held prior to this meeting with no public comment. She presented the Transit Grant Program Resolution R24-10 for consideration.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to approve Resolution R24-10, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS: Michael Poston, Planning Director, stated the Planning Department worked with the Planning Board on technical amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance Subdivision Regulations. The proposed amendments addressed inconsistent ordinance references for paving requirements, modernized paving materials references and clarified the paving requirements for campgrounds.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on July 8th and recommended the changes unanimously to the Board of Commissioners. They also adopted a statement of consistency with the County Land Use Plan 2040. A public hearing was held prior to the meeting with no public comment.

General discussions were held.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Unified Development Ordinance Amendments and Consistency Statement, as presented. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(12) RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD: A recommendation was submitted by Michael Hopkins, Parks and Recreation Director.

Motion: Commissioner Stribling moved to appoint Sara Stahlman to a three-year term on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(13) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

(14) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: Commissioner Bryson moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(3) Legal, G.S.143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property and G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel Commissioner Smith 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 Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman