

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
OCTOBER 15, 2024**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on October 15, 2024, 6:30 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, 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 Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the minutes a Public Hearing (2025 Schedule of Values) of October 08, 2024 and a Regular Meeting of October 08, 2024. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman Letson stated he had been volunteering in neighboring communities and had seen some of the destruction from Hurricane Helene. He felt for those communities and felt blessed Jackson County was spared.

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**: None.

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

(a) **Emergency Management Storage Building**: The building was up and they were working on the interior and fencing.

(b) **Aquatics Center**: In the process of compiling a punch list to finish the project in the next couple of weeks. Staff had been trained in all the functions of the systems.

(c) **Center for Domestic Peace**: Sub-footers had been installed along with all stormwater drainage. Foundation, rough-in plumbing, electrical and other utilities were being prepped. The elevator vault had been dug and was being installed.

(d) **Cashiers-Glenville Recreation Splash Pad**: The bid opening would be held on October 25th.

(e) **Whittier-Qualla Park**: The bid opening would be held on October 25th.

(f) **Department on Aging**: The assessment of the building had been completed. Informal bids would be requested from qualified contractors in the next month.

(g) **Canada Fire Department and Community Center**: Architect to complete the construction drawings.

(h) **Justice Center and Administration Building**: Architect to complete the bid documents.

(i) **Fair Grounds**: October 25th would be the assessment of the water tank. Reese McElrath were under contract for engineering.

(j) **Greenway:** Clean up underway from damage caused by the hurricane.

(k) **NCDOT Shared Use Path Cullowhee:** When fully approved, the county match for the project would be \$417,440.00.

(l) **School Projects:**

- **Fairview Elementary:** Would chose the architect in the next several weeks.
- **Blue Ridge Elementary:** Staff working on funding package.
- **Middle School:** Received proposals from several architects. They would have the design team picked by November. County and School Staff working to identify possible building sites and a funding plan.
- **Athletic Facilities at SMHS:** Received proposals from several architects. They would have the design team picked by November.

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

(a) Dr. Lynn Dillard provided the Board with an update after a work day at Blue Ridge School for items in need of repair and maintenance.

(b) Mary Lynn Foster of the American Red Cross, provided a brief update to the Board regarding Hurricane Helene.

(7) **CONSENT AGENDA:**

(a) Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the Finance Report for September, 2024 and three Budget Ordinance Amendments for fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, for approval.

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

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

(8) **SCHEDULE OF VALUES 2025:** Tabitha Ashe, Tax Administrator, requested adoption of the 2025 Schedule of Values for Market Value and Present Use Value.

A public hearing was held on October 08, 2024, with no public comments.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to adopt the proposed Schedule of Values for 2025, Market Value and Present Use Value, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) **HURRICANE HELENE BUSINESS RESPONSE GRANT:** Tiffany Henry, Economic Director and Betsy Norwood, Economic Development Intern, were present for this item.

Ms. Norwood stated, as discussed at the last work session, they were working to create a Business and Industry Grant Program. The key part of retaining businesses was to support them through difficult times, which was why the flood recovery grants for Dillsboro were so important. By helping the businesses recover, they could maintain economic stability, build long-term stability and make the county a more attractive place for future investment and growth.

Ms. Henry presented a non-profit grant application contract. She proposed a system similar to the Business Relocation Grant for the Highway 107 Project. The grant would be to the Jackson County Chamber to be distributed to businesses. There were approximately 14 businesses that received physical property damage. The grant was not for loss of revenue, it was physical damage only. This one-time grant of \$1,000 would allow businesses to clean their space and reopen in Dillsboro. The funding period would be from the end of November until funds were exhausted.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the Flood Recovery Grant Program for Dillsboro businesses, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY RESOLUTION R12-34

AMENDED: Nick Breedlove, JCTDA Executive Director, stated the Board discussed this item at the work session. He presented Resolution R12-34 Amended to reflect changes to the TDA Board structure and also to increase the Occupancy Tax from 4% to 6%.

Motion: Commissioner Jones moved to approve Resolution R12-34 Amended, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Jones stated this would enhance the tourist/visitor experience in the county. The minor increase would not affect citizens' pockets at all. Citizens would have enhanced experiences in various areas of recreation and tourism as well.

(11) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

(12) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: Commissioner Stribling moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property and 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 except the approval of the closed session minutes.

There being no further business, Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman