

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
FEBRUARY 20, 2024**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on February 20, 2024, 6:30 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Mark A. Letson, Chairman	Darlene Fox, Interim County Manager
Todd Bryson, Vice Chair	John Kubis, Interim 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) **PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF JULIE SPIRO DONALDSON**: Chairman Letson read a Proclamation to honor Julie Spiro Donaldson. Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Ms. Donaldson was present to accept the proclamation.

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

(3) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the minutes of a Special Called Meeting of February 02, 2024; a Regular Meeting of February 06, 2024; and a Joint Meeting with the Board of Education of February 08, 2024. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

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

(5) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**:

(a) Commissioner Stribling stated he visited the Aquatic Center project and it was coming along and looking good.

(b) Commissioner Jones stated the TWSA Annual Meeting would be held on March 5th at 4:00 p.m. It was always a very informative meeting and a good time to ask questions.

(6) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT**: Ms. Fox reported:

(a) **Cashiers Splash Pad**: Withers-Ravenel was finalizing the drawings and working on utilities/meter issue. Equinox assembled the package for the stormwater permitting. The project would be ready for submittal soon.

(b) **Domestic Violence Center**: Bids were accepted on February 15th and were being reviewed by the architect and Mr. Kubis. They were slightly over budget. She would bring the bids and additional funding sources to the Board on March 5th.

(c) **Solid Waste Transfer Station**: Debit and credit cards were now accepted at the Sylva Transfer Station. To date, they had taken 104 payments. The Cashiers Transfer site would be trained that week and would begin accepting payments the next week.

(d) **Whittier-Qualla Park**: Withers-Ravenel had been to the school site and surveyed for utilities for connection. The bid package should be ready by the last week in February.

(e) **Permitting and Code Enforcement**: She provided a Building Report for 2023:

- 2,293 permits issued
 - 1,171 in the Sylva Office
 - 1,122 in the Cashiers Office
- 189 permits issued in January 2024 compared to 181 permits in January 2023

(f) **Blue Cross Blue Shield Retiree Insurance**: The formulary ID was keyed incorrectly upon group setup. This negatively impacted the group membership when utilizing the pharmacy benefit. BCBSNC sincerely apologized for the error and would proactively work to resolve all issues. All members would be contacted and any copays charged would be refunded.

(7) **INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC**: David Joy stated he emailed some of the Commissioners in November when he was dealing with a lot of trespassers and poachers on his property. He requested the Board direct the County Attorney to research written permission laws for hunting, fishing and long guns. Over half the counties in the state had written permission laws, including Transylvania County. In Jackson County, unless the property was entirely posted, people could go on to the land and do what they wanted to. Written permission laws were a simple solution and did not limit accessibility. Property owners could allow others to hunt and fish on their property.

(8) **CONSENT AGENDA**:

(a) Ms. Fox presented the Finance Report for January 2024 and one Budget Ordinance Amendment for fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, for approval.

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

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

(9) **AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS**: Michael Poston, Planning Director, stated this item was presented at the work session. The Planning Department was assisting the Soil and Water Conservation Staff with amendments to the Agricultural District Ordinance to reflect recent changes in the North Carolina General Statutes. The Agricultural Advisory Board reviewed the proposed amendments and recommended the Board of Commissioners consider adoption of the amendments. He requested to set a public hearing on March 19th at 6:25 p.m.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to set a public hearing on March 19th at 6:25 p.m. for Agricultural District Ordinance Amendments. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) **MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY**: Ms. Fox stated Rob Hawk, Cooperative Extension Agent, presented this item to the Board at the work session. The county was currently in a non-lock-in agreement with the state. She presented a Memorandum of Agreement from the state for the county to consider, which would move towards a lock-in.

This was the preferred arrangement to support the salary agreement between the county and North Carolina State University for Extension personnel. This would mean when the state provided a raise, the county would automatically match the raise on the county portion. In the past, the Board of Commissioners had always provided the requested match.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with North Carolina State University, as presented. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) **AUDIT CONTRACT:** Ms. Fox presented the audit contract and stated she recommended awarding the contract to Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A., to audit the county records for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, in the amount of \$120,600, which included four major programs.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to approve the audit contract with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A., as requested. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(12) **OFFER TO PURCHASE AND CONTRACT FROM DAVIS AND RESOLUTION R24-02:** Ms. Fox stated the Board had seen this information at their last work session. The county received an offer from Tyler Davis for Lot 28, Hampton Springs, containing 1.54 acres, (PIN #7575-73-3611) in Hamburg Township for \$40,000.00. The property included an abandoned home that was approximately 40% completed.

She presented Resolution R24-02 for consideration.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to approve Resolution R24-02, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(13) **EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW BOARD:** Recommendations for appointments were submitted by Tabitha Ashe, Tax Administrator.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to appoint Roger Bartlett and to reappoint Robert Edwards, Richard Robson, David Noland and Norman West, to one-year terms on the Equalization and Review Board. Also, to appoint Richard Robson as Chairman and Robert Edwards as Vice Chair of the Equalization and Review Board. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(14) **PLANNING BOARD:** Carry over.

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

There being no further business, Commissioner Bryson moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman