

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JUNE 04, 2024**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on June 04, 2024, 6:00 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, Interim County Attorney (Via Zoom)
	Mark Jones, Commissioner	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
	John W. Smith, Commissioner (Via Zoom)	
	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 of a Work Session of May 14, 2024 and a Regular Meeting of May 21, 2024, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

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

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**: Commissioner Jones stated he wanted the Board to consider holding Commissioner meetings in other parts of the county, particularly Cashiers.

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

(a) **Recreation Center Aquatics Complex**: The project was 88% complete and was on task to be completed by July 27th. Following construction phase, they anticipate approximately one month of staff training. Tentatively, they anticipated being open to the public around Labor Day.

(b) **Center for Domestic Peace**: A pre-construction meeting was held on April 26th. Notice to proceed was issued on April 29th for phase 1 and the second notice to proceed would be issued on July 13th. Construction meetings would be held on a monthly basis starting July 17th. Mobilization and site prep had started.

(c) **Cashiers Splash Pad**: The project was projected to begin bidding in June. The necessary signatures had been collected from the Cashiers Valley Community Council for the required paperwork. They were awaiting the return of stormwater permits.

(d) **Webster Park**: The project was scheduled to commence on June 17th. All materials had been ordered and they were awaiting shipment. Solar lighting for the trails had been ordered and would be installed when received.

(e) **Whittier-Qualla Park**: The project was nearing the bidding stage, expected to commence in June. The erosion control application had been filed and it was confirmed a stormwater permit was not required.

(f) **Animal Shelter Dillsboro Complex**: Project completed.

(g) **Department on Aging**: Working with Chad Parker, Public Works Director, to look at other alternatives due to increased prices. They would engage a structural engineer to look at the building and he would meet with the original architect on June 14th for other solutions.

(h) **Canada Fire Department and Community Center**: Working with Mr. Parker and Odell Thompson, Architect, to develop a scope of work for the project. He visited the site and determined the project would need architectural and engineering service to create an adequate scope of work for fund development and bidding.

(i) **Mark Watson Park**: Receiving bids from various vendors to give options for pricing.

(j) **Justice Center**: Working with the architect to upgrade the Justice Center plan and develop alternatives for future growth. A meeting was held on June 3rd to start programming the administration building and begin the process of alternatives.

(k) **Drexel Plant**: A plan was being created for work flow and to develop project feasibility and direction. Making inquiries to FEMA for the detailed study area of river concerning floodway designation.

(l) **Dillsboro River Park**: The Parks and Recreation Department and Economic Development would look at possible uses for the vacant property.

(m) **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.

(n) **NCDOT Shared Use Path Cullowhee Recreation Highway**: NCDOT Commission set to vote on the project in June. County match was estimated at \$417,440.

Commissioner Jones inquired about the Dillsboro River Project.

Mr. King stated debris was left in the area and would have to be remediated before they could look at an extensive project. Staff could reach out to Duke Energy about an existing study or survey.

Commissioner Jones stated the Executive Director of the TDA had stated this area would be a positive place to start on projects, but he understood they could not move forward until the debris was removed for safety.

Also, there seemed to be a favorable response to the Tourism Development Authority to look at increasing the occupancy tax from 4% to 6%. That would be a source of funding for capital projects such as the Dillsboro River Park.

Commissioner Bryson inquired about the Whittier Park delay.

Mr. King stated the delay was due to sewer issues. They had to go a different route than the initial concept. Also, there were stormwater issues, but the project should go out to bid in June.

Commissioner Bryson stated he hoped they could get the project rolling very soon.

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

(7) **FIREWORKS DISPLAY REQUESTS**: Tony Elders, Director of Permitting and Code Enforcement, requested approval for applications he received for fireworks displays:

(a) Wednesday, July 3rd:

- High Hampton
- Chattooga Club
- The Village Green Cashiers
- Cedar Creek Racquet Club

(b) Thursday, July 4th:

- Mountain Top Club
- Chamber of Commerce Sylva
- Bear Lake Reserve
- Lonesome Valley
- Wade Hampton

- (c) Friday, July 5th:
- Friends of Lake Glenville
 - Country Club of Sapphire Valley

Commissioner Jones asked what the fee was for a show?

Mr. Elders stated it was currently \$300 per show. It was proposed in the FY24-25 budget to increase to \$350.

Commissioner Jones stated he wanted the Board to look into the future at increasing the fee to offset the extra expenses to the county.

Motion: *Commissioner Stribling moved to approve the requests for fireworks displays, as presented. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(8) TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROGRAM

GRANT: Michael Poston, Planning Director, stated the United States Federal Highway Administration issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity for active transportation networks. There was a total of \$44.5 million in funding divided between construction projects and planning projects associated with active transportation networks. This grant had a 20% match requirement. The construction grant required had a minimum award amount of \$15 million. Minimum award amount for planning projects was \$100,000.

The Planning Department had been working with the Parks and Recreation Department on the extension of the Tuckasegee River Greenway. They wanted to prepare an application for the preparation of construction documents for the next phase of the Greenway project. He reached out to the Southwestern RPO for assistance in preparing an application within the short window to apply and they agreed to assist. Applications were due by June 17. Preliminary cost estimates for the preparation of construction documents was approximately \$400,000. The county's required 20% match would be \$80,000.

He requested approval for staff to work with the Southwestern RPO in preparing an application in the amount of \$400,000, with the required match and for the Chairman to sign the application once completed in order to meet the June 17 grant deadline.

Chairman Letson asked Darlene Fox, Finance Director, where the funds would come from for this match?

Ms. Fox stated the \$80,000 could come from the Greenway Funds.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to approve staff working with Southwestern RPO to prepare an application in the amount of \$400,000, with the required match of \$80,000 and for the Chairman to sign the application, as requested. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) NCDOT OFFER TO PURCHASE ACQUISITION OF RIGHT-OF-WAY:

Mr. King presented an offer to purchase in the amount of \$573,575.00 for an easement at the Smoky Mountain High School area from NCDOT. The offer was sent to the Board of Education in April and was approved pending approval by the Board of Commissioners.

The property was under a QZAB loan with 0% financing. They worked out the details with Truist Bank, the note holder, for an agreement stating it was the intention to accept money without paying toward the QZAB loan. The Board of Education voted for the total funds to be placed in the School Capital Reserve Fund. He recommended the Board accept the offer.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the NCDOT Offer to Purchase Acquisition Right-of-way for \$573,575.00, placing the funds in the School Capital Reserve Fund, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) FY24-25 BUDGET DISCUSSIONS: Mr. King stated he previously presented a budget message to the Board and they had gone through the proper procedure of holding a public hearing. The adoption of the budget was set for June 18. He would have an addition of a supervisor for DSS that should have been added. Also, for SCC, they needed to move funds from Capital to Operations, with no new money. He asked if the Board had any changes, additions or deletions at that point for staff.

Commissioner Jones requested Mr. King reach out to gather more information about the \$500,000 request from Public Schools for the breakfast/lunch program. Having the cost of breakfast and lunch would help them gauge if this was enough funds or too much.

Mr. King stated they would make a request to have the information on a monthly basis and bill the county once per month so they could track and understand how to budget.

Commissioner Bryson stated staff had done a fine job putting the budget together, even though it was an increase. With inflation, the cost of living was needed for employees.

Chairman Letson stated prices and costs were not going down.

General discussions were held.

Informational item.

(11) PLANNING BOARD: A recommendation was submitted by the Planning Board.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to appoint Beverly Crespo as Vice Chair of the Planning Board. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(12) SEDIMENT CONTROL APPEALS BOARD: Recommendations were submitted by Mr. Elders. He also provided an overview of the Sediment Control Appeals Board.

Motion: *Commissioner Stribling moved to appoint Charles Middleton, Jeff Madden and Darin Allison to serve four-year terms on the Sediment Control Appeals Board. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(13) 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 6:32 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman