

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

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on December 17, 2024, 6:30 p.m., at Smokey Mountain Elementary School Media Center, 884 U.S. Highway 441 North, Whittier, North Carolina.

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

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

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

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Smith moved to approve the minutes an Organizational Meeting of December 02, 2024; a Regular Meeting of December 03, 2024; and a Work Session of December 03, 2024. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**: Chairman Letson reported he attended the Cashiers-Glenville Fire Department holiday party and the Sheriff’s Office Christmas party. They were both great events. He was able to thank a lot of people for their hard work through the hurricane and he thanked them for all their service in the community.

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**: Commissioner Smith echoed Chairman Letson’s comments about the Sheriff’s Office and Emergency Services.

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

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

(7) **CONSENT AGENDA**:

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

(b) Ms. Fox presented the Tax Collector and Refund Reports for November, 2024, for approval.

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

(8) LOCAL CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION TEAM: Mr. King stated the Child Fatality Prevention Team (CFPT) confidentially reviewed medical examiner reports, death certificates and other records for county residents under the age of 18 who passed away. Each local team was composed of representatives from a variety of public and private agencies, including law enforcement, the Department of Social Services, the Health Department, the District Attorney's Office, AWAKE, Mental Health services, Guardian Ad Litem, healthcare providers, medical examiner and others who served children and families in the community. Through these reviews, the CFPT identified opportunities for system improvements and recommended changes aimed at preventing future child deaths. The local team collaborated closely with Safe Kids Jackson County to offer educational programs and initiatives focused on reducing child injuries and fatalities.

Recent legislative changes were enacted through the 2023 Appropriations Act, which affected the NC Child Fatality Prevention System. While most of these changes would take effect on July 1, 2025, there was one requirement that must be met by January 1, 2025. Specifically, the Board of County Commissioners must decide whether the Local Team would continue to operate as a single-county team or transition to a multi-county team.

The team's recommendation would be to maintain the current structure as a single-county team. The manner and formality of this decision was at the discretion of the County Commissioners.

Motion: *Commissioner Jennings moved for the Local Child Fatality Prevention Team to continue to operate as a single-county team, as recommended. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) OFFER TO PURCHASE AND CONTRACT – MOSS PROPERTY: Mr. King presented an Offer to Purchase for PIN 7650-31-2558 and a portion of 7650-31-6188, containing 4.3+/- acres from Marilyn A. James and Wanda S. Moss for a purchase price of \$425,000.00. He also provided a tax map showing the property. This property would be the final piece needed along the Greenway.

Chairman Letson asked where the funds would come from for the purchase?

Ms. Fox stated funds were available in the Greenway Fund.

Chairman Letson stated they had made a lot of progress on the Greenway in the past eight months and this would be a huge addition.

Commissioner Jennings stated he was coming in at end of this, but it sounded like something they had to do.

Commissioner Smith stated to connect the pieces, they did need to do it.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Offer to Purchase and Contract for 4.3+/- acres for a purchase price of \$425,000, as presented. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) COMMUNICATION TOWER LEASE AGREEMENT: Mr. King stated this item was previously discussed at the work session. He presented the Lease Agreement for the Lyn Lowry Tower for emergency services for consideration.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Lease Agreement for the Lyn Lowry Tower, as presented. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) CHEROKEE ENTERPRISES CONTRACT FOR WHITTIER-QUALLA

PARK: Mr. King presented a contract agreement with Cherokee Enterprises, Inc., the low bidder for the Whittier-Qualla Park, in the amount of \$1,962,393. Cherokee Enterprises, Inc. was ready to begin work upon approval of the contract.

Commissioner Hooper asked how many bids were received for this project?

Ms. Fox stated five bids were received.

General discussions were held.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Contract with Cherokee Enterprises, Inc., for the Whittier-Qualla Park in the amount of \$1,962,393, as presented. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(12) JOINT MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION: Mr. King requested to set a joint meeting with the Board of Education to discuss upcoming school projects to come up with a scope and funding plan.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to set a Joint Meeting with the Board of Education on Thursday, February 6th at 6:00 p.m. at the Burrell Building at Southwestern Community College. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(13) RECREATION CENTER FEE SCHEDULE: Mr. King presented a revised Fee Schedule for the Recreation Center to eliminate the need for a turn-style entry and provide a discounted rate on the combo pass. This would simplify the process for staff and customers.

General discussions were held.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to adopt the revised Recreation Center Fee Schedule, as presented. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(14) RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY R24-13: Mr. King stated this item was discussed at the work session. He presented Resolution R24-13 Supporting the Blue Ridge Parkway, for consideration. No funds would be required from the county.

Motion: *Commissioner Hooper moved to adopt Resolution R24-13 Supporting the Blue Ridge Parkway, as presented. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(15) RESOLUTION APPOINTING REVIEW OFFICERS R24-14: Mr. King stated the Board was required to appoint Review Officers to review plats before recording. These resolutions would need to be adopted from time to time with staff changes. He stated Tabitha Ashe, Tax Administrator, made a request for consideration of Resolution R24-14 Appointing Review Officers.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to adopt Resolution R24-14 Appointing Review Officers, as presented. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(16) RESOLUTION SETTING REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE R24-15:

Chairman Letson stated the Board had discussed meetings dates and times previously. He presented Resolution R24-15 setting the Board meeting schedule for 2025 as follows: a regular meeting on the first Tuesday of each month beginning at 6:00 p.m. and the third Tuesday of each month beginning at 6:30 p.m. The Board would hold a work session on the first Tuesday of each month beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Motion: *Commissioner Hooper moved to adopt Resolution R24-15 Setting the Regular Meeting Schedule, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(17) AIRPORT AUTHORITY:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Jim Rowell to serve an additional six-year term on the Airport Authority. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(18) CEMETERY BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Jennings moved to appoint Daniel Keever to serve a four-year term on the Cemetery Board. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(19) FIREMEN'S RELIEF FUND BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Recommendations for appointments were submitted by the respective fire departments.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to appoint Brian McMahan of the Balsam VFD; reappoint Darren Messer of the Canada VFD; reappoint Phillip Farmer of the Cashiers VFD; reappoint Gordon Brown of the Cullowhee VFD; appoint Shandell Denton of the Qualla VFD; and reappoint Toby Moore of the Savannah VFD, to serve two-year terms on the Firemen's Relief Fund Board of Trustees, terms expiring January 1, 2027. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(20) HEALTH BOARD: A recommendation was submitted by Anna Lippard, Health Director.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to appoint Dr. David LeMay, DDS to fill the unexpired term of Dr. David McGuire, DDS, on the Health Board. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(21) PLANNING BOARD: A recommendation was submitted by Michael Poston, Planning Director.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Nathan Shepherd and Beverly Crespo to serve additional two-year terms and to appoint Jeffrey Gunter to serve a two-year term on the Planning Board. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(22) SOLID WASTE BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Jennings moved to reappoint Benjamin Wood to serve an additional four-year term and to appoint Daniel Keever to serve a four-year term on the Solid Waste Board. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(23) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY: A recommendation was submitted by Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director.

General discussions were held.

Motion: *Commissioner Jennings moved to table this item. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(24) US 441 GATEWAY DISTRICT COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL: A recommendation was submitted by Michael Poston, Planning Director.

General discussions were held.

Motion: *Commissioner Hooper moved to reappoint Debbie Cowan, Dora Robinson, Myra Cloer, Kathy Davis and Susan Kinsland to serve additional three-year terms on the US 441 Gateway District Community Planning Council. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(25) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

There being no further business, Commissioner Hooper moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman