

**MINUTES OF A
BOARD RETREAT
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
FEBRUARY 18, 2025**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Board Retreat on February 18, 2025, 10:00 a.m., Room 102, Burrell Building, Southwestern Community College, 447 College Drive, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present:	Mark A. Letson, Chairman	Kevin King, County Manager
	Jenny Lynn Hooper, Commissioner	John Kubis, County Attorney
	Michael Jennings, Commissioner	Darlene Fox, Finance Director
	John W. Smith, Commissioner	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
Absent:	Todd Bryson, Vice Chair	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

(1) INTRODUCTIONS AND PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: Mr. King stated this meeting would provide an overview of the budgetary process to the Board in order to start discussions over the next several weeks and months to be able to adopt a budget in June.

He presented the following general information:

(a) Mandated County Service Areas:

- General Government:
 - Election Administration
 - Deed Registration
 - Tax Assessment and Collections
 - Courts Maintenance
 - Medical Examiner
- Community and Environmental Services:
 - Code Enforcement / Inspections
 - Solid Waste Management
 - Water Quality
 - Environmental Health and Safety Inspections
- Human Services:
 - Social Services
 - Public Health
 - Child Welfare
 - Behavioral Health
- Public Safety:
 - Emergency Management
 - Fire Protection
 - Ambulance Service
 - Law Enforcement
 - Detention

(b) Discretionary County Services:

- Community and Environmental Services:
 - Parks
 - Open space
 - GIS
 - Libraries
 - Animal Control, Shelter
- Human Services:
 - Cooperative Extension
 - Housing Affordability
 - Homeless Prevention
 - Veterans Services

(c) Role of the Public:

- Elect Board of Commissioners as its representative for leading the county.
- Gain an understanding of the County Manager's Budget recommendations presented in the annual budget.
- Attend public hearings or submit public comments to voice support or disagreement with recommendations contained within the proposed budget.

(d) Role of Board of Commissioners:

- Represent their constituents.
- Establish county policy and set the property tax rate.
- Evaluate the budget recommendation of the County Manager.
- Hold a public hearing to provide residents an opportunity to speak on the proposed budget.
- Hold budget work sessions to discuss the recommendations contained within the budget proposal and may request the County Manager make modifications.
- Approve modifications to the budget through the year.

(e) Role of County Departments:

- Complete operational plans to communicate service needs and priorities.
- Request funding for the upcoming fiscal year to support delivery of services to the community for specific program areas.

(f) Role of the County Manager:

- Establish countywide priorities for budget development.
- Understand Board of Commissioner priorities and actions required to accomplish them.
- Outline major new initiatives.
- Evaluate requests from departments; prepare evaluations and analysis to finalize the budget recommendation.
- Make formal budget recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.
- Communicate the impact of any major tax or fee increase on residents and businesses.

Informational item.

(2) FINANCIAL REVIEW: Ms. Fox presented:

(a) Analysis of Revenue: Revenues Per Capita in 2024:

- Property tax: 1109
- Other tax: 23
- Sales tax: 525
- Sales and services: 204
- Intergovernmental: 264
- Debt proceeds: 0
- Other miscellaneous: 149

(b) Expenditures by function for Fiscal Year 2024:

- Education 25.68%
- Debt Service 4.94%
- Human Services 19.96%
- General Government 14.47%
- Public Safety 16.72%
- Other 18.23%

(c) Analysis of Available Fund Balance: General Fund:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Jackson County	33.83	37.93	37.37	48.86	49.11
Group	34.97	42.37	44.93	55.15	53.21
State	34.45	43.40	44.56	47.51	46.70

(d) Analysis of Property Tax: Collection Rate percentage:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Jackson County	98.13	98.83	98.98	99.26	99.14
Group	97.94	98.29	98.36	98.57	98.31
State	98.78	99.09	99.18	99.32	99.27

(e) Outstanding Debt as of July 1, 2024:

<u>Date Incurred</u>	<u>DOLP</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
10/25/2012	10/25/2027	2.79%	SMH Gym, Fine Arts, BR Locker Room	\$1,666,666.75
3/22/2017	3/30/2032	0%	School Improvements-QZAB	\$4,200,000.00
01/30/2019	02/01/2039	3.81%	SCC Health Sciences Building	\$7,000,000.00
06/16/2022	06/01/2037	3.228%	Indoor Pool Facility	\$15,998,000.00
			Anticipated new debt for county projects	\$29,000,000.00
			Anticipated new debt for school projects	\$21,000,000.00
				\$78,864,666.75

General discussions were held.

Informational item.

(3) SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: Mr. King presented:

(a) Southwestern Community College Master Plan Priorities:

- 1. Founders Hall Renovation for Dental Hygiene/Assisting Program \$1,514,335
- 2. Library Addition - Oak Hall \$19,607,532
- 3. Routine Repairs and Renovations \$1,000,000
- Total projected costs \$22,121,867 (all costs without furniture/equipment)

(b) State SCIF Funding available \$5,000,000

(c) State Capital Improvement Funding available \$10,000,000

(d) Remaining balance of \$6,121,867 required

(e) Ad Valorem Tax (operating) \$1,000,000

General discussions were held.

Informational item.

(4) MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS: Mr.

King presented: Major Capital Improvement Projects Public Schools Prioritized by the Board of Education:

1. Cafeteria at Fairview
2. Traditional Middle School
3. ADA upgrades/concession stand at SMHS stadium
4. Track on Jones Street property
5. New Bus Garage on current site
6. Blue Ridge Gym with Performance Space, Classroom space needed too
7. Softball Field upgrades at Webster

General discussions were held.

Informational item.

(5) ARTICLE 40 AND 42 SALES TAX: Ms. Fox stated a portion of the Articles 40 and 42 sales tax was mandated to go to K-12 Public Schools for capital needs. In order for the schools to access these funds, both the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education must agree on the priorities.

She presented Article 40 and 42 Sales Tax:

	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026	FY 2026-2027	FY 2027-2028	FY 2028-2029
Articles 40 & 42 Total:	\$4,810,274.84	\$4,995,678.35	\$5,195,505.48	\$5,403,325.70	\$5,619,458.73	\$5,844,237.08	\$6,078,006.56
	4.75%	3.85%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%
School Capital Expenditures:	\$4,810,274.84	\$4,995,678.35	\$5,195,505.48	\$5,403,325.70	\$5,619,458.73	\$5,844,237.08	\$6,078,006.56
New Year Addition	\$1,989,757.84	\$2,063,761.35	\$2,412,188.48	\$2,638,608.70	\$2,854,741.73	\$3,079,520.08	\$3,313,289.56
Balance Available	\$2,685,806.18	\$4,749,567.53	\$7,161,756.01	\$9,800,364.72	\$12,655,106.45	\$15,734,626.53	\$19,047,916.09

Informational item.

(6) ARTICLE 46 SALES TAX: Ms. Fox presented:

(a) Article 46 Sales Tax Projections:

	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24	FY24-25	FY25-26	FY26-27	FY27-28	FY28-29
Projection Amount	\$2,311,340.57	\$2,409,353.61	\$2,496,344.44	\$2,596,198.22	\$2,700,046.15	\$2,808,047.99	\$2,920,369.91	\$3,037,184.71
Cumulative total	\$9,719,041.41	\$12,128,368.02	\$14,624,712.46	\$17,220,910.68	\$19,920,956.82	\$22,729,004.82	\$25,649,374.73	\$28,686,559.44
	11.92%	4.24%	3.61%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%
SCC Health Sciences Bldg. Debt Payment	(\$838,137.50)	(\$819,087.50)	(\$800,037.50)	(\$780,987.50)	(\$761,934.50)	(\$742,887.50)	(\$723,837.50)	(\$704,787.50)
Transfer to School Improvement Projects	(\$3,400,000.00)							
New year additional after debt payment	(\$1,926,796.93)	\$1,582,616.98	\$1,696,304.94	\$1,815,210.72	\$1,938,108.65	\$2,065,160.49	\$2,196,532.41	\$2,332,397.21
Cumulative Total	\$342,868.47	\$1,933,134.58	\$3,629,441.52	\$5,444,652.24	\$7,382,760.88	\$9,447,921.38	\$11,644,453.79	\$13,976,851.00

(b) Funds available for K-12 Public Schools and/or Southwestern Community College.

Informational item.

(7) CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS: Mr. King presented:

(a) Major Capital Improvement Projects Approved:

- Domestic Violence Shelter: \$5,349,779 (50% ARPA Revenue Replacement, 50% Dogwood)

(b) Major Recreation Projects Approved:

- Cashiers-Glenville Recreation Master Plan: Funded \$1,144,826, project was currently being rebid
- Whittier-Qualla Park: Land purchase \$400,000; Construction \$2,256,633 (PARTF Grant \$500,000), contract awarded and under construction

(c) County Capital Improvement Projects:

- 1. Administration Building
- 2. Justice Center Renovations
- 3. Canada Fire Department Building
- 4. Drexel Property – Fairgrounds and Event Center – funded general fund \$2,000,000

General discussions were held.

Informational item.

(8) CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS REVENUE PROJECTIONS: Ms. Fox presented:

(a) Funding Projections FY2025-2029:

Revenue Type	FY24-25	FY25-26	FY26-27	FY27-28	FY28-29
CPR	\$239,481	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Capital Reserve	\$4,026,146	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Totals	\$4,265,627	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
Cumulative Totals	\$4,265,627	\$5,765,627	\$7,265,627	\$8,765,627	\$10,265,627

(b) Additional Funding Sources Fund Balance:

	Amount
FY 2024 Total Fund Balance	\$53,067,687
Reserved by FBP 25%	(\$13,266,922)
Stabilization by State	(\$7,045,167)
Other Assigned/Committed	(\$5,383,036)
Available for Funding	\$27,372,562

(c) American Rescue Plan Act: Revenue Replacement \$8,534,441

Purpose-Committed	Amount
Public Safety Equipment	\$1,210,450.90
Homeless Planning	\$28,500.00
Domestic Violence Center	\$2,729,281.50
Cashiers-Glenville Recreation Project	\$1,111,691.00
Whittier-Qualla Recreation Project	\$920,967.09
AWAKE Renovations on Building	\$64,711.57
Webster Park Playground	\$341,371.65
Broadband Great Grant Match	\$600,000.00
Total Committed	\$7,006,973.71
Current unspent ARPA Funding	\$1,527,467.29

General discussions were held.

Informational item.

(9) FACILITY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FY25-29: Ms. Fox presented:

(a) Objectives of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) were the result of an ongoing process by county officials to assess the need for major capital expenditures. It would promote discussions regarding priority, feasibility, timing, potential costs, financing options and future budgetary effect.

(b) Development of the CIP included the facilitation and exchange of information and coordination between the county, the school board and the community college on capital planning. The capital needs were determined for county government, public schools and the community college.

(c) Projects in the CIP included:

- County Government: New Administration Building, Justice Center renovations, Canada Fire Department renovations, Housing and Greenway projects.
- Public Schools: Fairview and Blue Ridge renovations, new Middle School and Athletic Fields.
- Southwestern Community College: Founders Hall, Oaks Hall, Library and SBC renovations.

(d) Financing the CIP:

- Ad Valorem Tax
- Article 40, 42 and 46 Sales Tax
- Debt
- Lottery R&R
- State Grants

(e) Southwestern Community College Projects:

	<u>FY24-25</u>	<u>FY25-26</u>	<u>FY26-27</u>	<u>FY27-28</u>	<u>FY28-29</u>
Founders Hall renovations, Dental Program	\$93,700	\$710,318	\$710,317		
Library, Small Business Center	\$1,568,603	\$6,742,833	\$5,648,048	\$5,648,048	
Oaks Hall expansion					
Routine repairs and renovations	<u>\$200,000</u>	<u>\$200,000</u>	<u>\$200,000</u>	<u>\$200,000</u>	<u>\$200,000</u>
TOTAL	\$1,862,303	\$7,653,151	\$6,558,365	\$5,848,048	\$200,000
Funding breakdown					
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Article 46 Sales Tax - SCC	\$1,815,211	\$1,938,109	\$2,065,160	\$303,387	
SCIF State Funding	<u>\$1,662,303</u>	<u>\$7,453,151</u>	<u>\$5,884,546</u>	-	-
TOTAL REVENUES	\$3,677,514	\$9,591,260	\$8,149,706	\$503,387	\$200,000

Mr. King presented:

(f) County Projects:

	<u>FY24-25</u>	<u>FY25-26</u>	<u>FY26-27</u>	<u>FY27-28</u>	<u>FY28-29</u>
Canada Fire Department	\$200,000	\$1,850,000	\$1,850,000		
Administration Building	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$7,000,000	\$6,500,000	
Justice Center Additions/Renovations		\$500,000	\$500,000	\$7,000,000	\$6,500,000
Housing Projects	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Recreation/Greenway	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Routine Repairs and Renovations	<u>\$250,000</u>	<u>\$250,000</u>	<u>\$250,000</u>	<u>\$250,000</u>	<u>\$250,000</u>
TOTAL	\$2,200,000	\$4,350,000	\$10,600,000	\$14,750,000	\$7,750,000
Funding breakdown					
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000
State Directed Grant	<u>\$200,000</u>	<u>\$1,850,000</u>	<u>\$1,850,000</u>	-	-
TOTAL REVENUES	\$1,700,000	\$3,350,000	\$3,100,000	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000
Debt Payments \$29,000,000		\$2,595,500	\$2,537,500	\$2,479,500	\$2,421,500
Tax Increase		\$0.0156	\$0.0156	\$0.0156	\$0.0156

Ms. Fox presented:
 (g) Public Schools Projects:

	FY24-25	FY25-26	FY26-27	FY27-28	FY28-29
Blue Ridge improvements	\$200,000	\$3,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000	
Fairview improvements	\$200,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000		
Middle School					
New Construction	\$200,000	\$13,023,309	\$21,848,275	\$16,928,416	
Grant Match property purchase/site dev		\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000		
SM Athletic Improvements	-	-	-	-	-
Ballfield Lighting	\$450,000				
Football Stadium	-	-	\$1,671,950	-	-
Softball Field upgrades	-	\$450,000	-	-	-
Track Facility	-	\$1,671,950	-	-	-
Bus Garage improvements	-	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	-	-
Information Technology	-	-	-	-	-
Technology	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000
One to One Devices	\$320,700	\$320,700	\$320,700	\$320,700	\$320,700
Preventative Repairs and Renovations	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$375,000
TOTAL	\$2,645,700	\$27,240,959	\$37,115,925	\$24,024,116	\$1,095,700
Funding breakdown					
Article 40 & 42 Sales Tax	\$1,050,000	\$4,232,255	\$3,655,851	\$2,284,020	\$3,270,832
Article 46 Sales Tax - Public Schools		\$814,721	\$814,721	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Lottery R&R	\$500,000	\$500,000			
NCDPI Needs Based Grant	\$200,000	\$9,023,309	\$25,848,275	\$16,928,416	
TOTAL REVENUES	\$1,750,000	\$14,570,285	\$30,318,847	\$20,212,436	\$4,270,832

	FY24-25	FY25-26	FY26-27	FY27-28	FY28-29
Debt Payments \$21,000,000		\$1,879,500	\$1,837,500	\$1,795,500	\$1,753,500
Sales Tax Balances		\$2,195,125	\$2,195,125	\$2,195,125	\$2,195,125
Additional needed for Debt Payments		(\$315,625)	(\$357,625)	(\$399,625)	(\$441,625)
Tax Increase		\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000

(h) CIP FY25-29 Grand Total:

	FY24-25	FY25-26	FY26-27	FY27-28	FY28-29
Grand Total	\$6,708,003	\$39,244,110	\$54,274,290	\$44,622,164	\$9,045,700
Total Tax increase		\$0.0156	\$0.0156	\$0.0156	\$0.0156
Total Debt \$50,000,000					

General discussions were held.
Informational item.

(10) TAX VALUES: Ms. Fox presented:

(a) Estimated 2025 assessed values in each township. Totals were as follows:

- Market Value: \$20,838,079,145
- Exemption Amount: \$2,037,623,303
- Deferred Amount: \$311,749,051
- Taxable Value: \$18,488,706,791

(b) Township Value Comparisons. Totals were as follows:

- 2024 Value \$11,484,159,725
- 2025 Value \$18,488,706,791
- Increase \$7,004,547,066
- % Increase 60.99%

(c) Ad valorem tax:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Value</u>
Ad Valorem Tax Value TR-1	\$18,488,706,791
Motor Vehicle	<u>\$561,025,595</u>
Total Value	\$19,049,732,386

- Total ad valorem tax rate currently \$0.38 per \$100
- Collection rate @ 99.14%
- 1 cent on tax rate = \$1,888,590

General discussions were held.
Informational item.

(11) PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES: Ms. Fox presented:

(a) Fire Department Operations:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Capital</u>	<u>Total Request</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Balsam Add \$25,000 to operations; \$40,000 for truck down payment, \$355,171 for parking lot replacement	\$141,087	\$166,087	\$395,171	\$561,258	\$420,171
Canada Add \$41,150 to operations (35%); Payoff tanker \$253,000	\$117,574	\$158,725	\$253,000	\$411,725	\$294,151
Savannah Replace pumper/tanker \$560,000; Repave parking log \$120,000	\$159,586	\$159,586	\$680,000	\$839,586	\$680,000
Cullowhee 5% increase and add 3 firefighters	\$1,125,550	\$1,532,421		\$1,532,421	\$406,871
Sylva 5.5% increase and add 2 firefighters	\$987,602	\$1,222,634		\$1,222,634	\$235,032
Qualla Option 1: 12 employees Option 2: 11 employees Option 3: 8 employees	\$379,993	\$1,590,820 \$1,499,719 \$1,313,510		\$1,313,510	\$933,517
Total Increase					\$2,969,741

(b) Ambulance/Rescue Squad Operations:

	Current	Requested	Capital	Total Request	Increase
Harris EMS 3 additional employees and market adjustment	\$1,712,981	\$461,042		\$2,174,023	\$461,042
Glenville-Cashiers Ambulance 2024 expenses with 3% increase plus \$75,000 for Station 2; New ambulance	\$1,432,894	\$601,106	\$380,000	\$2,414,000	\$981,106
Rescue 1 (Sylva) \$27,000 increase; add an additional District Coordinator \$38,000	\$135,293	\$65,000		\$200,293	\$65,000
Rescue 2 (Glenville-Cashiers) Additional \$20,000 per month; add an additional District Coordinator \$38,000	\$150,293	\$278,000		\$428,293	\$278,000
Total Increase					\$1,785,148

General discussions were held.
Informational item.

At 11:47 a.m., the Board recessed for a lunch break.

At 12:25 p.m., Chairman Letson called the meeting back to order.

(12) **BUDGET DRIVERS:** Mr. King presented:

(a) Ad Valorem Tax and Sales Tax New Year Projections:

Source of Revenue	Projected Increase	Amount
Ad Valorem Taxes	Revenue Neutral average growth rate 2.99%	\$1,426,706
Motor Vehicle Taxes	\$20,000,000 Increase in Value	\$99,398
Sales Tax	4% Increase	\$990,595
	Total New Capacity Projected	\$2,516,699

(b) Payroll projections for FY 2025-2026:

- The Career Path Salary Program was currently up to date
- Projection for a one step increase for the career path: \$877,251
- Steps 1-9 = 3.15%; Step 10 = 3.00%; Steps 11-30 = 1.50%
- 2% Cost of Living Increase: \$546,065
- Total increase for salary and benefits: \$1,423,316
- Overall averages: Step increase 2.27%; Step increase with 2% COLA 3.50%
- Cost of living last year 3.7%; mid-year 2.9%; estimated at year end 2%

(c) Health Insurance:

- Mark III Brokerage did a cost analysis and recommendation on the Health Insurance Coverage for the new year renewal effective July 1, 2025.
- Rate action projection 2%
- Current monthly rate \$1,244 / annual cost: \$14,932
- New monthly rate \$1,268 / annual cost \$15,230
- New year projected cost \$134,398

(d) Funding Capacity and Budget Driver Summary:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$1,426,706
Motor Vehicle Taxes	\$99,398
Sales Tax	\$990,595
Total	\$2,516,699

<u>Driver</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Payroll	\$1,423,316
Health Insurance	\$134,398
Total	\$1,557,714

(e) Additional capacity available: \$958,985

General discussions were held.
Informational item.

(13) GENERAL DISCUSSIONS AND OTHER PRIORITIES: Mr. King asked if there were other items the Board wanted staff to look at:

(a) Mr. King stated additional items they were already looking into included:

- Enterprise Fund: possibly another transfer station or C&D in Cashiers
- Inspections Office in Cashiers: additional employee
- Nonprofits: would present to the Board about needs in the future.

(b) Chairman Letson asked to look into:

- A location for storage for the Sheriff and Emergency Management.
- A location for a skate park.
- Opening the Health Department Office in Cashiers again for services

(c) Commissioner Hooper asked to look options for childcare, as there was a real need in the county.

(d) Commissioner Smith asked to look at bringing health department and DSS county employees, who were under the State Pay Plan, to the County Pay Plan.

General discussions were held.
Informational item.

(14) HARRIS REGIONAL HOSPITAL EMS: Matthew Burrell, EMS Operations Manager; Kyle Dowling, Supervisor and Training Officer; and Toby Moore, Supervisor, were present for this item.

Mr. Burrell presented:

(a) Reports provided for monthly volume, calls by unit number, by medical category, response code and fire district

(b) Response times: EMS goal was to have an average emergency response of less than 10 minutes and average routine response of less than 15 minutes.

(c) Quality Improvements: Harris Regional EMS updated protocols to include new medications aimed at reducing mortality and morbidity in certain patient groups:

- Have ability to start IV antibiotics in the pre-hospital setting for severe sepsis patients as well as open fractures and amputations.
- Studies showed early antibiotic administration in these cases show better outcomes.

(d) Blood Products: Harris Regional EMS carried blood products in supervisor vehicle 12 hours per day and were looking to expand the program to carry 24-hours a day.

- Prehospital blood product administration could reduce mortality and morbidity in severely anemic patients.
- Harris EMS was 1 of 7 in the Western Region (34 counties) of NC that could administer blood products in the prehospital setting.
- They were 1 of 17 in the entire state
- They were the westernmost service in NC with the capability

(e) History of Harris EMS QRV: In 2015, the decision was made to add a supervisor on a quick response vehicle (QRV) 7a-7p 7 days a week. This supervisor had been a valuable resource to the EMS system. Since the QRV resource went offline from 7pm to 7am, both supervisors and the EMS Manager rotated on call status to try to support responsibilities as needed.

(f) Responsibilities:

- Responding to calls for service with an ambulance to assist with high acuity patients. Some of these high acuity patients required an additional paramedic to perform an advanced skill called drug assisted intubation. This skill required additional resources including two paramedics on scene. Most days EMS units were not staffed with two paramedics.
- Becoming 3rd caregiver on an ambulance to transport critically ill and injured patients that were intubated and on a mechanical ventilator to tertiary care facilities.
- Responding in a QRV with a Lucas Device to all cardiac arrests.
- Truck maintenance scheduling and troubleshooting
- Scheduling employees and ensuring units were staffed adequately
- Scheduling all transports
- Office duties including billing and quality assurance chart review
- Many other duties, as needed

(g) Training Officer: Currently one EMS supervisor served as the training officer. The training officer role had many responsibilities.

(h) Salary increase:

- They completed a market salary study. They were below the market starting salary for paramedics in the region.
- Current starting paramedic pay was \$19.20 per hour
- Since 2024, lost 11 full-time employees

(i) Proposal: Add an additional three FTEs to make the supervisor unit 24 hours and have a dedicated training officer Monday-Friday. Also, a salary adjustment to stay competitive and help with recruitment and retention.

- Total yearly cost of 3 FTE: \$239,982.60
- Market adjustment cost: \$221,059.00
- Total: \$461,041.60

General discussions were held.

Informational item.

(15) TAX REAPPRAISAL: Tabitha Ashe, Tax Administrator, was present for this item.

Mr. King stated staff had done outreach services to provide information to the public regarding the tax reappraisal notices that went out. Bill Davis, Public Information Officer, worked with Ms. Ashe to put together informational videos and post them to the county's Facebook page to brief citizens and make them aware the notice received was not a tax bill.

Ms. Ashe stated she looked back at past reappraisals in the county and it was not uncommon for values to increase at these rates. Currently, other counties in the state had an average increase in value of between 50%-60% plus. Property owners had until March 5th to appeal. She purchased ads with the local radio station and newspaper for outreach to the public.

Mr. King stated the rate would be set with the adoption of the budget in June.

General discussions were held.

There being no further business, Chairman Letson adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman