

**MINUTES OF A
SPECIAL BUDGET WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JUNE 10, 2025**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Budget Work Session on June 10, 2025, 5:30 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

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|----------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Present: | Todd Bryson, Vice Chair | Kevin King, County Manager |
| | Jenny Lynn Hooper, Commissioner | Darlene Fox, Finance Director |
| | Michael Jennings, Commissioner | |
| | John W. Smith, Commissioner | |
| Absent: | Mark A. Letson, Chairman | |

Vice Chair Bryson called the meeting to order.

(1) BUDGET DISCUSSIONS: Mr. King presented information requested by the Board providing the call volume for each fire department. Also, he provided information about Service Districts, which they would not have time to implement that year. He also provided information from the proposed budget showing requested increases and a tax rate of 0.32 per 100.

It was difficult to set a tax rate in a revaluation year, especially with the number of projects going and with the increase for public safety. He thought next year, they should look at going through the process to separate fire and look at how it would work with the Cashiers service tax.

General discussions were held.

(a) Commissioner Smith asked to look at WCU and the Cullowhee Fire Department.

General discussions were held.

Mr. King stated staff would start having a dialogue with the fire department on this issue.

(b) Vice Chair Bryson asked about the upgrade to the system in the jail.

Commissioner Jennings stated they had to do the jail system upgrade.

Commissioner Hooper stated she agreed.

Mr. King stated the Sheriff was getting a new quote.

Ms. Fox stated they would take the funds out of current year budget for this item.

(c) Commissioner Smith asked about updated numbers for the certified and noncertified staff supplements for the school system.

Dr. Dana Ayers, Superintendent, stated she sent two different estimates out to the Commissioners. One would keep certified staff at \$2,000 and increase noncertified staff to \$1,000 from \$600, which would be about \$400,000 less than requested. The other calculation increased both \$200 for a total of \$2,200 for certified and \$800 for noncertified, which would be about \$400,000 less than requested.

Ms. Fox stated it would be an additional \$526,199 over the recommended to fund the supplements of \$2,000 for certified and \$1,000 for noncertified. It would be an additional \$356,921 over the recommended to fund the supplements of \$2,200 for certified and \$800 for noncertified.

General discussions were held.

(d) Commissioner Smith stated he wanted to fully fund the JROTC Program because a lot of people spent a lot of time and money setting it up. He did not want to cut it short since they just got it and to continue to get people in the program and maintain it.

Commissioner Jennings stated he did not feel the same way because so much of the county could not use the service. He loved the program and thought it was great, but for Tuckasegee south it was not available to use.

Commissioner Smith stated it would be extremely difficult because of logistics, but they were not disallowed.

General discussions were held.

(e) Vice Chair Bryson asked about the Greenway Fund.

Ms. Fox stated the Greenway Fund had \$1,400,000 in it with about \$1,000,000 left after one property purchase was completed. It was proposed to add \$750,000 to the Greenway Fund.

Vice Chair Bryson asked about taking from the Greenway Fund for the \$356,921 school supplements. They could continue working on the Greenway as they had in the past. He asked about the cost of Greenway construction.

Ms. Fox stated it was about \$2,000,000 per mile. They had 1.6 miles to construct.

Commissioner Hooper stated she thought they could wait on the Greenway for a year.

General discussions were held.

(f) Vice Chair Bryson asked about Vision Cashiers and Village Green.

Mr. King stated they would allocate \$500,000 to Vision Cashiers and \$137,000 to Village Green and the two organizations would work together.

General discussions were held.

(g) Commissioner Jennings inquired about the Balsam Fire Department paving.

Mr. King stated they had cut the amount down to \$200,000.

General discussions were held.

(h) Commissioner Jennings asked about the Green Energy Fund requested 30% increase.

Mr. King stated staff was not recommending the 30% increase. The request was made to increase the facilities, to include a ceramic lab, so they could increase programming. The ceramic lab was cut out that year. The project had always been supplemented by the county. New management indicated if the county spent a little more money, they could get closer to breaking even with their own resources.

General discussions were held.

(i) Commissioner Jennings asked about the Economic Development Fund.

Mr. King stated staff recommended to fund this increase for one additional person in the department.

General discussions were held.

(j) Commissioner Smith asked about the Solid Waste addition.

Mr. King stated the Transfer Station would be open from 12 to 3, which was factored in.

(k) Ms. Fox stated SCC asked for an additional \$83,000 for capital for incidentals.

Commissioner Hooper stated she wanted to hold off on the request. SCC could come to the county if there was a need.

(l) Ms. Fox stated Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad asked for an additional \$60,000 for salary increases. This was above the recommended budget.

General discussions were held.

Consensus: *Grant the \$60,000 request for the Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad from the Greenway Fund.*

(m) Mr. King stated the Sheriff requested \$83,000 for Detention Officer Step increases.

General discussions were held.

Consensus: *Grant the \$83,000 request for the Sheriff's Office for Detention Officer Step increases from the Greenway Fund.*

(n) Vice Chair Bryson stated the request for the JROTC Program was \$70,000.

General discussions were held.

Consensus: *Grant the \$70,000 request for the JROTC Program from the Greenway Fund.*

(o) Vice Chair Bryson stated the supplement for certified and noncertified school staff of \$200 each would be a total of \$356,921.

General discussions were held.

Consensus: *Grant the \$356,921 for Public School supplements of \$200 for certified and \$200 for noncertified staff from the Greenway Fund.*

(p) Vice Chair Bryson asked if the Board wanted the remaining \$180,000 of the recommended \$750,000 for the Greenway Fund to be placed in the Greenway Fund.

General discussions were held.

Consensus: *Place \$180,000 into the Greenway Fund.*

(q) Vice Chair Bryson asked about thoughts on school lunch.

General discussions were held.

Consensus: *Fund \$530,000 for school lunches. The schools could come back to the Board if they needed additional funds.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hooper 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