

**MINUTES OF A
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JUNE 24, 2025**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Called Meeting on June 24, 2025, 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, County Attorney (Via Zoom)
Jenny Lynn Hooper, Commissioner	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
Michael Jennings, Commissioner	Darlene Fox, Finance Director
John W. Smith, Commissioner	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

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

(2) **FY2025-26 BUDGET ORDINANCE**: Mr. King stated at the last meeting there were discussions about working to reduce the proposed tax rate from 32 cents to 31 cents. He, along with Ms. Fox, looked at all the categories and proposed the following changes for the proposed rate of 31 cents:

- Capital Reserve reduction: \$1,000,000
- Sheriff's Office Animal Control Officer and Middle School SRO removed: \$221,380
- Canada Fire Department reduction: \$35,000
- Savannah Fire Department reduction: \$70,000
- Balsam Fire Department reduction: \$200,000
- Greenway transfer reduction: \$200,000
- Contingency reduction: \$101,241
- Total reduction: \$1,827,621

A public hearing was held on June 3rd with public comment.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to adopt the FY2025-26 Budget Ordinance, along with all fee schedules, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Commissioner Bryson stated the Board would revisit the Middle School SRO when the project was completed.

(3) **FONTANA REGIONAL LIBRARY AGREEMENT**: Mr. Kings stated the Board requested to have this item for further discussions and consideration to leave or remain in the Fontana Regional Library (FRL) System.

Chairman Letson stated after the joint meeting, they saw FRL had policies in place for child safety, content and all the things the Commissioners brought up as concerns. The FRL Board had turnover in the last six months where new members were taking on responsibilities and policies were being changed.

From what they gathered initially, it would cost more in the long run to leave than it would if they remained within FRL. No one had appealed a book in the last two years. If the books were so bad, he would think in the last two months, they would have seen a lot of appeals, they would have heard about them and would have been able to direct them better, but there had not been that drive in the community other than open forum debate.

To him, it did not make sense to remove themselves from FRL being the pieces were in place to move the policies they needed or FRL felt they needed. He did not see the urgency with Avery going through the same process. If they waited another year, they could see what Avery had done well or not, where they could save money and where they could prepare for the unknown.

If they did move forward, they had some immediate things that would have to happen and it may leave them short-handed at the libraries. He talked to Tracy Fitzmaurice, FRL Director and to Cynthia Womble, FRL Board of Trustees Chair. Had any of the other Commissioners talked to them regarding some of these issues?

He felt it was not fair for the Commissioners to appoint the FRL board members and six months later remove themselves from the agreement because they had not had time to really try and make the strides in the policies. It would be hard pressed to find a library board moving forward. That was his opinion.

Commissioner Hooper stated, personally she felt the county needed to govern their own library.

Commissioner Smith stated at the joint meeting with FRL, they heard a lot of “we can look at that” and “we can’t do that”. They did not have any “we will do that”. Without starting a clock for them to get out, he did not see any incentive for FRL to do anything. At that point, he thought they needed to start the clock, which would give them a year for the new board members to change the direction or make changes. If the Commissioners liked the changes before the year was up, then great.

Commissioner Jennings stated he did not like the fact that even with each county being able to appoint their own board members, whether it be Jackson or another county, they could still be out voted on what they wanted in their own county. If Macon County felt they were not getting what they needed, but Jackson and Swain had enough votes to out vote them, Macon had no say. Or the same with Jackson or Swain. He did not like that about it.

Commissioner Smith stated they needed to be able to control their own library.

Commissioner Bryson stated he had spoken to Ms. Fitzmaurice. The Commissioners did talk with the FRL Board in the joint meeting and it did not seem like they were willing to budge. He liked to imagine they would work on some of those things. That was where he stood.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved for Jackson County to exit from the Fontana Regional Library System. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by a vote of 4-1, with Chairman Letson voting “nay”.*

There being no further business, Commissioner Hooper moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 06:11 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman