

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
AUGUST 05, 2025**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on August 05, 2025, 6:30 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	
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) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Smith moved to approve the minutes of a Regular Meeting of July 15, 2025, as presented. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman Letson stated school would be back in session soon. He asked everyone to watch out for kids and school buses. He congratulated Dr. Ayers on a successful Back to School Bash.

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**: None.

(5) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT**: Mr. King reported:

(a) **Center for Domestic Peace**: They were in the process of holding on ordered items. He would proceed with a letter to RA Crawford to put them on notice that the county would be seeking actual and liquidated damages, per the contract.

(b) **Fair Grounds**: The footers were completed and the building would be going up in the next couple of weeks. They were working with EBCI on a grant from ARC for the water portion.

(c) **Public Library**: Hall and White Library Consultants had been hired and came highly recommended with a lot of experience with transitional processes and strategic planning.

(d) **School Projects**: The topo had been done. Once the building had been placed with the architectural and civil engineering group, the soil borings would go out. The due diligence period would be over on August 15th with a closing date of September 15th.

(6) **PUBLIC COMMENT**:

(a) Sara Ward stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.

(b) Nara Aire stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.

(c) Michell Arellanes stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.

(d) Susan Barscheski stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.

(e) Luther Jones stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.

(f) Susan Danner stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.

- (g) Teri Cole-Smith stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (h) Kay Callaghan stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (i) Marianna Coyle stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (j) Beth Baxley stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (k) Sarah Steiner stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (l) Allen Lomax stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (m) Terre Folger stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (n) Kim Mason stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (o) Laura Laufer stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (p) Rebecca Herbers asked if the library would qualify as a nonprofit.
- (q) Walter Anderson stated concern about Wi-Fi capability at the library going forward.
- (r) Rebecca Abel asked what items would be retained by FRL.
- (s) Loran Berg stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (t) Whitney Kreiling stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (u) Keith Blaine stated concern for overpayment to FRL and FRL's finances.
- (v) Kim Mitchell asked if the courier service between the three county libraries would continue.
- (w) Chris Hamlet stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (x) Antoinette MacWatt stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.
- (y) Kate Baker stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL. Also, she stated concern about the gas station being built next to the old Jack the Dipper near the river.
- (z) Andy Starostecki stated concern for the Board's decision to exit the FRL.

(7) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY GRANTS: Nick Breedlove, Tourism Development Executive Director, stated at the July 16th Tourism Development Authority (TDA) meeting, the board reviewed two applications submitted through the Tourism Capital Project Fund program. The TDA Board recommended both projects be fully funded. In accordance with governing legislation (R12-34), final approval was required from the Board of Commissioners.

He provided a brief summary of the grant requests:

(a) Project Rise: \$500,000 in funding submitted by the Economic Development, the Jackson County Fair Grounds would be a transformative 28-acre tourism complex adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad corridor in Whittier. The development included two major facilities: a 24,000 sq. ft. enclosed event venue and a 48,000 sq. ft. open-air pavilion. These multi-use spaces would support a variety of activities, such as cultural events, educational programming, regional festivals and potential rail-themed excursions. Construction was scheduled to begin in July 2025 and was expected to conclude by May 2026. The project anticipated generating 33,000+ room nights annually and creating up to 40 seasonal jobs. With 80% of the \$4.53M project budget spent locally, this investment supported sustainable tourism growth, community enrichment and long-term economic vitality. The county's request was for \$500,000 in Tourism Capital Project Funds toward development.

(b) Dillsboro Link: \$250,000 in funding submitted by the Town of Dillsboro. The Town of Dillsboro was seeking support to acquire a 2.06-acre parcel at 66 Dills Street for the construction of a pedestrian boardwalk linking the historic downtown to the Monteith Farmstead and Appalachian Women's Museum. The infrastructure would provide safe, walkable access between two key cultural and recreational assets, to encourage extended visitor engagement and support local businesses. Scheduled to break ground in August 2025, the boardwalk would enhance Dillsboro's appeal as a walkable heritage destination. With a projected useful life exceeding 50 years, the \$675,000 project was fully locally funded through combined contributions from the Town of Dillsboro (\$175,000), Jackson County (\$250,000) and a \$250,000 TDA grant request. Maintenance would be covered through the Town's parks budget.

He requested consideration of the two grants.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to approve both of the Tourism Development Authority Grants, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(8) TAX SETTLEMENT REPORT: Brandi Henson, Tax Collector, presented the Tax Settlement Report for May 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025, for approval.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Tax Settlement Report, as presented. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) NCACC ANNUAL CONFERENCE VOTING DELEGATE: Chairman Letson stated the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners 118th Annual Conference would be August 21st – 23rd. The business meeting would be held on Saturday, August 23rd. The Board would need to designate a Voting Delegate.

Motion: *Chairman Letson moved to appoint Commissioner Hooper to serve as the Voting Delegate. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

There being no further business, Commissioner Hooper moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman