

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on November 18, 2025, 6:30 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Mark A. Letson, Chairman
Todd Bryson, Vice Chair
Jenny Lynn Hooper, Commissioner
Michael Jennings, Commissioner (Via Zoom)
John W. Smith, Commissioner

Kevin King, County Manager
John Kubis, County Attorney (Via Zoom)
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

(1) **AGENDA**: Chairman Letson requested to add one item: Agreement with Cashiers-Glenville Fire Department; and to remove one item: Amended Fontana Regional Library Agreement. Commissioner Hooper moved to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Chairman Letson noted that the Amended Fontana Regional Library Agreement would be advertised on the county website for 30 days. The item would be moved to the December 16th regular meeting.

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the minutes of a Public Hearing (Cullowhee Planning Map Amendment) of November 04, 2025; a Regular Meeting of November 04, 2025; and a Work Session of November 04, 2025. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman Letson reported he would be going to the Canada Fire Department and Community Building on November 20th at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the needs for the community building.

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**: Commissioner Smith stated that he attended the Veterans dinner and it was a great event. Sheila Setzer, Veterans Service Officer and all the volunteers did a great job.

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

(a) **School Projects**: The county was heavily involved in the process for the Middle School project and they were close to getting the site plan to soil borings. The timeline would be to have a groundbreaking by September 1st. The Fairview project would go out to bid in January. The SMHS Track bid opening would be December 2nd.

(b) **Library:** He provided the Board with financial data for the Library. Over the last couple of months, staff had been in the process of identifying all the necessary elements to create the Jackson County Library System. In June, he provided the Board with an estimate of \$500,000. As of November 18, the Jackson County Library Additional Costs:

| | <u>FY 2025-2026</u> | <u>FY 2026-2027</u> | <u>FY 2027-2027</u> | <u>Totals</u> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Network, Computer, Phone Expenses | \$200,000.00 | | | \$200,000.00 |
| Vehicle | \$40,000.00 | | | \$40,000.00 |
| Contracted Services | \$50,000.00 | | | \$50,000.00 |
| Staff and Benefits | | \$53,856.76 | \$320,510.52 | \$374,367.28 |
| Add County IT Position and Benefits | | \$89,904.00 | \$89,945.64 | \$176,849.64 |
| Total Increases | \$290,000.00 | \$140,760.76 | \$410,456.16 | \$841,216.92 |

In January, he would request a Budget Amendment in the amount of \$240,000. The Board had previously allocated \$50,000. These figures did not take into account any anticipated revenues or adjustments. State Aid was estimated at \$121,000. Staff was working with Fontana Regional Library to identify items needed for the different aspects.

General discussions were held.

Informational item.

(6) INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC:

(a) Beth James stated it was not guaranteed the county would pay an additional \$500,000 per year for a county library. Also, clarification was needed about the process of challenging books.

(b) Tom Downing expressed disapproval of the proposed FRL amendments. He also expressed disapproval for the lack of progress by the Board on several issues in the county.

(c) John Herrera requested the Board vote for the FRL amendments and remain in partnership with the FRL.

(d) Becky Abel expressed disapproval with the Board's actions and requested to remain in the FRL.

(e) Kim Mitchell read from a passage in a book.

(f) Keith Blaine expressed concerns about incorrect information provided in June regarding \$500,000 for the library. He noted that state aid and other revenues would be received annually.

(7) CONSENT AGENDA:

(a) Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the Finance Report for October, 2025; three Budget Ordinance Amendment for fiscal year ending June 30, 2026; and one Capital Project Ordinance for approval.

(b) Brandi Henson Brooks, Tax Collector, presented the Tax Collector and Refund Reports for October, 2025, for approval.

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

(8) **2026 CENSUS TEST:** Kristen Nespoli, Partnership Specialist, US Census Bureau, stated although the census was five years away, a test would be conducted in 2026 in preparation for 2030. Only a few counties had been selected to participate and Western North Carolina was one of the areas. In the first phase, they would be recruiting and hiring with a starting pay of \$26.50 per hour.

Informational item.

(9) **REPORT TO THE CITIZENS:** Kerri Tucker, Executive Assistant to the County Manager, presented the 2024-2025 annual Report to the Citizens and highlighted the following areas:

(a) Commissioners and Residents:

- Key accomplishments for the county
- Strategic priorities and goals for 2026
- Community initiatives

(b) Annual Budget Performance:

- Revenue sources
- Expenditure breakdown
- Efficiency improvements

(c) Community Impact:

- Public Safety
- Infrastructure updates
- Social programs
- Education
- Health Services
- Community Engagement

(d) Looking ahead:

- Planned capital projects
- Policy goals
- Community opportunities
- Future public participation

Informational item.

(10) **WEBSTER VILLAGE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING:** Tiffany Henry, Economic Development Director, presented a Joint Venture Agreement for the Webster Village Housing Project that involved several different partners. This formal agreement was between Mountain Projects, Givens Communities, Western Carolina University and the county. The project would be built on a 48-acre tract in Webster, bringing together senior housing, affordable housing and workforce housing.

Givens Communities' portion would be 120 units for senior housing. Mountain Projects' portion was approximately 33 single-family homes. Western Carolina University's portion would be for workforce housing. The county pledged a total of \$1.5M and recently applied for the CDBG-NR grant for infrastructure. She requested approval of the agreement.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the Webster Village Memorandum of Understanding, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) **JOINT MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION:** Mr. King requested the Board to set a joint meeting with the Board of Education to discuss the status of ongoing projects.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to set a Joint Meeting with the Board of Education on Thursday, January 22, 2026, at Southwestern Community College, as requested. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(12) **VISION CASHIERS LICENSE AGREEMENT:** Mr. King presented a License Agreement with Vision Cashiers to allow sidewalks to be placed on a portion of county property located next to Cashiers Lake. Mr. Kubis had reviewed and approved the agreement.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Vision Cashiers License Agreement, as presented. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(13) AGREEMENT WITH CASHIERS-GLENVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT: Mr. King presented an agreement for the county to provide consent to the Cashiers-Glenville Fire Department to borrow funds for a fire truck. The document authorized the Chair to sign documentation on behalf of the county, as the taxing authority, for the purchase of the fire truck.

Motion: Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the Agreement with Cashiers-Glenville Fire Department, granting the Chairman authority to execute the documents, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(14) RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE DANGEROUS DOG REVIEW BOARD R25-28: Mr. King presented Resolution R25-28 to establish a Dangerous Dog Review Board. By state statute, this document would allow the Health Department to have a Dangerous Dog Review Board and would allow a citizen to have an appeal process should a dog be declared a “dangerous dog”.

General discussions were held.

Motion: Commissioner Smith moved to approve Resolution R25-28 Establishing the Dangerous Dog Review Board, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(15) ABC BOARD:

Motion: Commissioner Bryson moved to reappoint David Noland to serve an additional three-year term on the ABC Board. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(16) AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD:

Motion: Commissioner Bryson moved to reappoint Neil Dawson, Joe Grasty and Lisa Kelly to serve additional three-year terms and to appoint Nathan Darnell to serve a three-year term on the Agricultural Advisory Board. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(17) AIRPORT AUTHORITY:

Motion: Commissioner Bryson moved to reappoint Gary Boyer and Jason Kimenker to serve additional six-year terms on the Airport Authority. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(18) AMERICA 250 COMMITTEE:

Motion: Commissioner Bryson moved to appoint Bill Davis.

Motion: Commissioner Hooper moved to appoint Cody Lewis.

Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion for Bill Davis to serve on the America 250 Committee. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(19) BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Motion: Commissioner Bryson moved to reappoint David Gates to serve an additional three-year term on the Business and Industry Advisory Committee. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(20) CASHIERS PLANNING COUNCIL:

Motion: *Chairman Letson moved to reappoint Douglas Homolka and Judy Zachary to serve additional three-year terms on the Cashiers Planning Council. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(21) CEMETERY BOARD: *Carry Over.*

(22) COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR LONG TERM CARE:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Sara Lee Hinnant to serve an additional three-year term and to appoint Stephanie Bank to serve an initial one-year term on the Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(23) COUNCIL ON AGING:

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to reappoint Debbie Coffey to serve an additional three-year term on the Council on Aging. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(24) CULLOWHEE PLANNING COUNCIL:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Karen Kandl to serve an additional three-year term on the Cullowhee Planning Council. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(25) HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Pamela Meister and Michael Moore to serve additional three-year terms and to appoint Norrie Meus to serve a three-year term on the Historic Preservation Commission. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(26) PLANNING BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Hooper moved to reappoint Elmer Humbert to serve an additional two-year term and to appoint Keith Blaine, William Bryan and Mary Kathryn Harvey to serve two-year terms on the Planning Board. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous*

(27) PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD:

Motion: *Chairman Letson moved to reappoint Beth James and Lauren Baxley to serve additional three-year terms on the Public Library Board. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous*

Motion: *Commissioner Hooper moved to appoint Keith Blaine to serve a three-year term on the Public Library Board. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous*

(28) RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Tom Watterson, Adam Holt, Megan Cagle and Jay Spiro to serve additional three-year terms on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to appoint Walter Rowland to serve a three-year term on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(29) REGION A AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Motion: *Commissioner Hooper moved to reappoint Charlotte Cowan to an additional three-year term and to appoint Sandra Brooks and Cynthia Gallinger to serve three-year terms on the Region A Aging Advisory Council. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(30) SEDIMENT CONTROL APPEALS BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Barry Stevens and Alex Stillwell to serve additional four-year terms on the Sediment Control Appeals Board. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(31) SOLID WASTE BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to appoint Betty Foti to serve a four-year term on the Solid Waste Board. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(32) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

Motion: *Chairman Letson moved to appoint Dale Collins as Chair of the Tourism Development Authority. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to appoint John Faulk, Jason Kimenker and Douglas Brett Stewart to serve terms on the Tourism Development Authority. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(33) TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Kevin Tafoya to serve an additional three-year term and to appoint Cristian Mireles to serve a three-year term on the Transit Advisory Board. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(34) TUCKASEEGEE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY:

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to appoint Bruce Alan Farmer and Stanley Bryson.*

Motion: *Commissioner Hooper moved to appoint Keith Blaine and Stanley Bryson to serve three-year terms on the Tuckasegee Water and Sewer Authority. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion.*

Motion: *Chairman Letson moved to appoint Bruce Alan Farmer and Stanley Bryson to serve three-year terms on the Tuckasegee Water and Sewer Authority. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion.*

All Motions failed. Carry over this item to the next regular agenda.

(35) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

(36) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(3) Legal and G.S.143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

Chairman Letson called the regular meeting back to order and stated no action was taken in closed session except the approval of the closed session minutes.

There being no further business, Commissioner Hooper moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried, the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman