

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JANUARY 06, 2026**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on January 06, 2026, 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
	John W. Smith, Commissioner	
Absent:	Michael Jennings, Commissioner	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

(1) PROCLAMATION FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE:

Chairman Letson read a Proclamation to proclaim January 19th as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) AGENDA: Chairman Letson requested to remove one item: Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Commissioner Smith moved to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) MINUTES: Commissioner Hooper moved to approve the minutes of a Regular Meeting of December 16, 2025, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(4) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairman Letson stated the flu and Covid were rampant in the county. He urged everyone to wash hands and do their best to protect the elderly and immunocompromised.

(5) COMMISSIONER REPORTS: None.

(6) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. King reported:

(a) Airport Authority: He attended the Airport Authority meeting and they were applying for a \$2M grant for the terminal building. If the grant was received, the Authority would be coming before the Board in March with a presentation.

(b) Administration Building: The first round of bids would be opened on January 8th.

(7) PUBLIC COMMENT:

(a) Kim Oliver, Program Director of the Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) Program, stated JAM taught children ages 8-18 traditional mountain music at the Library. They offered low cost lessons and need-based scholarships. After hearing the Library may change direction, she searched for a new space and they were now located at WCU, but they lost 20% of their students with the move.

(b) John Herrera stated support for the Library. He urged the Board to keep the complex and library together. He requested to keep the door open.

(c) Chris Bogardus distributed some of the books listed on the Jexit brochure to the Commissioners.

(d) Roberta Buckner stated the history of the Library. She shared the involvement and contributions of the citizens of the county for the Library.

(e) Betsy Keller stated the Commissioners had a moral obligation to represent the people of the county and the districts they represented. She requested a referendum about the Library to find out what people wanted.

(f) Sarah Hirsch stated everyone loved the Library and Tracy was doing a great job. She was a member of Dogwood Crafters and Sylva Stitchers, which both held their meetings at the Library. Would that go away? She requested a strict accounting of taxpayer dollars for every meeting they all attended.

(g) Betsey Hamlet provided history of the Library. She also shared about the volunteers and donations that were made at the time the Board of Commissioners decided to renovate and add to the Old Courthouse for the Library.

(h) Antoinette MacWatt stated 650 individuals and groups booked rooms in the Library Complex in 2025. Did the county want to divide the Library Complex? Without access to spaces in the Historic Courthouse, they did not have the facility the community asked for. The Commissioners and citizens of the county invested time, talent and over \$8.6M to build the complex.

(i) Casey Walawender stated the Board hired library consultants and paid them \$11,000. In a public records request, Mr. King stated there was not a final deliverable from the consultants. The community needed to continue to press for answers and remember whose seats were up for reelection.

(8) FY2026-2027 BUDGET CALENDAR: Ms. Fox presented the proposed FY2026-2027 Budget Calendar for consideration:

January 6	Regular Commissioner Work Session – Set budget calendar
February 17	Commissioner’s Budget Retreat at the Burrell Building SCC10:00 am
February 25	Manager’s preliminary meeting with Departments and Offices
March 1	Nonprofit Grant Applications Disseminated
March 23	All requests submitted to Finance
March 31	Nonprofit Grant Applications Due
April 7	Regular Commissioner Work Session –summary of all new requests 6:30 pm
April 13-24	Manager / Finance Budget Meeting with Departments and Agencies
April 27-May 4	Finance Officer inputs changes from Manager/Finance Budget Meetings
May 5-8	Manager/Finance/Manager finalize budget recommendations presentation
May 6	Regular Commissioner Work Session – Capital Projects, new requests update
May 19	Regular Commissioner Meeting – Manager’s Recommended Budget 6:30 pm
May 21	Special called budget work sessions to hear presentations if needed 9:00 am
June 2	Regular Commissioner Meeting – Budget Public Hearing 5:55 pm
June 4-5	Special called budget meetings as needed to make final adjustments
June 16	Adoption of budget 6:30 pm

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

(9) **PRESS CONFERENCE:** None.

(10) **CLOSED SESSION:**

Motion: *Commissioner Hooper 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 Smith 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 and the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman