

**MINUTES OF A JOINT MEETING OF
THE JACKSON BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND
THE JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
HELD ON JANUARY 22, 2026**

The Board of Commissioners met in a Joint Meeting with the Board of Education on January 22, 2026, 6:00 p.m., at Southwestern Community College, Burrell Building, 447 College Drive, Sylva, North Carolina.

Board of Commissioners:

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

Kevin King, County Manager
John Kubis, County Attorney
Darlene Fox, Finance Director
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Board of Education:

Present: Wes Jamison, Board Chair
Abigail Clayton, Vice Chair
Kim Moore, Board Member
Gayle Woody, Board Member
Absent: Dr. Lynn Dillard, Board Member

Dr. Dana Ayers, Superintendent
Ashley Leonard, School Board Attorney

Chairman Jamison called the meeting of the Board of Education to order.

Chairman Letson called the meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order.

Ms. Clayton moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Commissioner Hooper moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Dr. Ayers stated the purpose of the meeting was to review current projects plans, drawings, estimated costs and determine needs and priorities.

(1) SCHOOL CAPITAL PRIORITIES: Dr. Ayers presented: Projects under development:

- (a) Smoky Mountain High School
 - Track and Field Facilities
 - Stadium Facilities Improvements
- (b) Fairview Elementary School
 - Kitchen and Cafeteria
- (c) Blue Ridge School
 - Auxiliary Gym
 - Kitchen and Cafeteria
 - Performing Arts Center
- (d) Replacement Bus Garage
- (e) Smoky Mountain Middle School (critical need grant funding)

Informational item.

(2) REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ALLOCATIONS: Ms. Fox presented: Local governance dollars approved and allocated for the following campuses:

- (a) Smoky Mountain High School \$4M
- (b) Fairview Elementary \$4M
- (c) Blue Ridge School \$15M
- (d) Bus Garage \$2M
- (e) Smoky Mountain Middle School \$60M total
 - State Grant Funds \$52M
 - Additional \$8M local funds allocated

Informational item.

(3) PROJECT REVIEW: Randy Baker, Principal Architect of Pinnacle Architecture, presented:

- (a) SMHS Track and Field Complex
 - Base ask:
 - 8 lane-track
 - Field events
 - Considerations:
 - Restrooms
 - Concession Building
- (b) SMHS Stadium Facilities Improvements
 - Base ask:
 - ADA compliance for home stands
 - Considerations:
 - Visitor facilities
 - Replacement fieldhouse
 - Concession Building
- (c) Fairview Cafeteria and Kitchen
 - Base ask:
 - Kitchen and Cafeteria
 - Perimeter Security
 - Considerations:
 - Presentation State
 - Outside Dining
 - Concession Building
- (d) Blue Ridge School and Early College
 - List of ask:
 - Gym
 - Cafeteria
 - Kitchen
 - Classrooms
 - Performing Arts
- (e) Replacement Bus Garage
- (f) Smoky Mountain Middle School

Informational item.

(4) BUDGET PRESENTATION CLARIFICATIONS: Stephen Boyd, Preconstruction Manager and Erin Renwick, Senior Project Manager of Vannoy Construction, presented: Information that was primarily conceptual, order of magnitude intended to identify and mitigate risks. Design was not yet complete and there were many unforeseen conditions for each campus. Budgets were based on a combination of recent historical data and current market conditions. The goal was to identify key cost drivers and facilitate decision making to better align scope with funding.

Projected JCPS Budget Breakdown as of January 22, 2026:

Smoky Mountain High School	
Running Track and Field Events	\$2,517,355
Track Restroom Building	\$735,832
ADA Renovations at Stadium	\$500,000
Replacement Field House w/ Site	\$5,779,000
Owner Soft Costs 15%	\$1,430,000
Campus Total	\$10,962,187
Fairview Elementary School	
Placeholder Site Development	\$2,000,000
Kitchen and Cafeteria with Security Walls	\$5,693,000
Performing Arts Stage	\$915,000
Owner Soft Costs 15%	\$992,000
Campus Total	\$96,000,000
Blue Ridge School Renovations	
Site Development	\$7,156,000
New Gymnasium	\$14,126,000
Outdoor Sports Facilities	\$501,000
Two-Story Classroom Wing	\$6,360,000
New Kitchen and Cafeteria including Demolition	\$5,626,000
Owner Soft Costs 15%	\$5,066,000
Campus Total	\$38,835,000
JCPS Bus Depot Replacement	
New Building	\$3,046,000
Placeholder Demolition and Site Development	\$2,000,000
Owner Soft Costs 15%	\$757,000
Campus Total	\$5,803,000
New Smoky Mountain Middle School	
Site Development	TBD
School Building	TBD
Sports Facilities	TBD
Owner Soft Costs 15%	TBD
Campus Total	TBD
Projected Total Budget for JCPS Projects	\$65,200,187

Chairman Letson stated his biggest question was about the allocation of \$30M towards the projects with a total number of \$65M. Based on what they were looking at last year, it seemed they had underestimated what was needed.

Dr. Ayers stated they could basically put the Bus Garage on the back burner. That would be \$5.8M where she could see a hold. That would be her first recommendation.

General discussions were held.

Dr. Ayers stated the Smoky High and Blue Ridge projects may be phased. She thought it was important for the Boards to have conversations as this was not what they expected. Where could they cut or phase for more palatable costs. They asked for track restrooms and a small concession to be an alternate. They also asked for a stage at Fairview as an alternate. At Blue Ridge the greatest need was a cafeteria, but the greatest want was a new gym.

Mr. Jamison stated there could potentially be ways to decrease costs at Blue Ridge.

General discussions were held.

Chairman Letson stated this was a great start. He believed all these projects were needed. It would be how would they find the money. It would be a balancing act.

Informational item.

There being no further business, Commissioner Bryson moved to adjourn the Board of Commissioners meeting. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

There being no further business, Ms. Clayton moved to adjourn the Board of Education meeting. Ms. Moore seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk

Mark A. Letson, Chairman