

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
FEBRUARY 05, 2019**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on February 05, 2019, 6:00 p.m., Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair
Mickey Luker, Commissioner
Ron Mau, Commissioner
Gayle Woody, Commissioner

Don Adams, County Manager
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **AGENDA**: Chairman McMahan requested to add one item: Quasi-Judicial Hearing for Cell Tower Application. Commissioner Woody moved to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Mau moved to approve the minutes of a Work Session of January 15, 2019 and a Regular Meeting of January 22, 2019. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman McMahan report that he attended a very informative meeting about the upcoming Medicaid Transformation process that would unfold in the state. The presentation was good and explained all that would come into play as to how the system would work and operate. There would be an impact on the local health department and other entities in the county. It would basically be like an insurance program where individuals would be issued an insurance card and there would be a sign up process. It was an interesting process that had been done in other states, but not exactly the same in each state. They would roll out the state in four regions with the first two regions to be announced in February.

The second part of the meeting was with North Carolina Rural Center, which primarily worked on behalf of infrastructure programs, such as water and sewer. They did a presentation advocating on behalf of what they called "Increasing Health Coverage in Rural North Carolina", providing gap coverage. There was an increasing bi-partisan effort in the state to try and work to expand Medicaid to fill in the gap to offer approximately 500,000 residents access to Medicaid. The Rural Center was looking at it from a perspective of what it did to the rural economy and the impact it had on jobs. They also talked about a couple of bills that would potentially be introduced in the long session and how they would track and receive feedback from local government officials. It was a very informative session.

Also, he served on the Vaya Health County Commissioner Advisory Board and attended their meeting on Monday. They received a good update as to how Vaya would fit into the Medicaid Transformation. That was followed that up by the RPO meeting, which consisted of the six western counties.

The presentation informed them of the new STIP Plan 5.0. Some of the changes included several projects' start dates being shifted forward in time. For example, Highway 107 Tuckasegee had a construction date of May, 2022, it had been shifted to August, 2022. The other project that shifted was the Modernization Median Improvements along 107 to 116 from December, 2021 to December, 2022. Those were two major changes affecting the county. This was all due to funding from the DOT cycle.

(4) COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

(a) Commissioner Deitz stated that he and Commissioner Woody went to the Region A meeting, which was very good. They had a guest speaker that presented on the Census coming up and how important it was to the county. It was so important to the county that everyone be counted.

(b) Commissioner Woody stated she was impressed with how it was emphasized how important the Census was and that the Commissioners could support that effort. They did need folks to canvass, but this would be the first time it could be done online, which would be a benefit and a challenge for some people.

(c) Commissioner Mau stated that the Tuckasegee Chapter of Trout Unlimited had a trash pickup along Scotts Creek and he thanked them for that.

(5) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Adams reported the upcoming meeting schedule:

Work Session February 12th at 1:00 pm

Regular Meeting February 20th at 1:00 pm

Joint Meeting with the Board of Education February 20th at 3:00 pm

Budget Retreat February 21st at 1:00 pm

Mr. Adams noted that regarding the Census, they had an experienced Planning Staff that had worked on the Census. Michael Poston, Planning Director and his staff were involved and developing a program of work to discuss with the Board. They did understand the importance of the Census and getting a correct count. He supported the marketing and outreach plan that Mr. Poston would bring to the Board.

Commissioner Deitz added that he went by the new Health Department location and they were pleased with the space. He commended all the employees of the Health Department, Maintenance and County Staff that made the move possible, they did a great job.

(6) INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC: None.

(7) ANNUAL EXTENSION REPORT: Rob Hawk, Extension Director, presented the 2018 Jackson County Program Impact Report Executive Summary:

Jackson County was still mostly rural with many of the same economic and social issues any rural Appalachian county had such as unhealthy lifestyle, disconnect from the land and no future leaders. However, three distinct regions of the county were more developed that offered other extension programming challenges. The central part of the county had an expanding university (WCU) of 11,000 near the Town of Sylva that helped fuel the economy more so than other mountain counties. Other amenities included a diverse topography and climate as one of the most mountainous counties in Eastern America with high elevations and fertile river valleys to grow specialty horticulture crops such as Christmas trees, specialty crops and pasture for small cow/calf farms.

A long standing second home community, which was hard to reach, in the southern part of the county, had been developed for well over 100 years for those from the deep south to escape the summer heat and a thriving mainstream tourist community in Cherokee at the northern end of the county. All this made for programming that must be diverse to serve a rural to semi-urban populations. These populations were in need of a broad range of requests such as second home residents that demand much of commercial landscape companies and rural populations that wanted traditional agricultural extension programs. The educated populous from the university wanted STEM type programs for their young families. The following 2018 programs tried to meet these needs:

(a) Horticulture work (nearly 1,453) had been primarily with the Christmas Tree, Landscape Industry, Specialty Crop Producers, Beekeeping and many home gardeners and small farmers in 2018. Agent partnered with the Public Works Director to secure an NCDA & CS grant for the Pesticide Container Recycling Program for \$3,285 for a holding cargo container for empty pesticide containers that would ultimately be recycled. In addition, metal signage was purchased with appropriate instructions on how to recycle.

(b) Beekeepers of the county successfully established their club as a Chapter of the NC State Beekeepers Association. Officers were elected, bylaws established and monthly meetings scheduled with varying educational topics to meet the needs of veteran and beginner beekeepers. There were 35 plus members with an average number of 30 attendees per club meeting.

(c) Strawberry and Caneberry Training had 100% of the participants stating they gained knowledge about strawberry and caneberry production. 63% indicated they planned to change the way they manage their pests. 79% shared they would change their fertility practices. 63% stated they would switch to organic practices and 8% of those surveyed stated they would establish a commercial strawberry or caneberry operation. As a result, participants increased their knowledge for long term sustainable production at home or as new commercial berry producers.

(d) Landscape Contractors Certification benefited twenty seven Landscape Contractors, in which they were able to obtain the continuing education units needed for re-certification with minimum interruption of their business activities and for a low cost.

(e) 4-H and Youth Development directly worked with 1,878 through nine active 4-H Clubs including STEM, Leadership and Embryology with schools.

(f) Coding Starts Young 4-H Program had results show that 57% of the children answered “Yes” to the question “I know that instructing Dash to move is how computers are programmed (coded).” It was observed that the children made decisions about how to change the robot movements. They extrapolate that to mean they would continue to apply those skills throughout their education and lives.

(g) Learning 21st Leadership Skills Program by the Jackson County Youth Leadership Council prepared youth for the ever changing world through real world experiences. One member stated “I learned how to be accountable for the direction and focus of an entire group, how to plan meetings and communicate on behalf of a group.

(h) FCS started back in October of 2018 after a 10 month FCS coverage lapse. However, the new FCS Agent did have an impact on about 50 residents in Healthy Nutrition Choices, Cooking and Healthful Hints with Shopping. CED offered a healthy lifestyle walking program so that an FCS program did occur when the office had no FCS Agent the first half of 2018.

(i) The Smokies Ski-Walking School of Spring 2018 had twelve participants that attended the school with some even purchasing their own ski-walking poles after trying the county extension center's rental ski-walking poles. A few of the participants said "they enjoyed the class" and "could feel the poles working their shoulders and arms" more than just walking. Six were continuing to ski-walk one month after the school concluded on June 4, 2018.

(j) The new Livestock and Animal Agriculture Agent worked with 793 livestock people, primarily working through the Jackson, Macon and Swain Cattleman's Association in herd health, livestock nutrition and the new 4-H Livestock Club.

(k) Beef Quality Assurance Training provided 16 producers with BQA certifications, had five producers utilize the cattle handling/working equipment and corral system and 25 producers who expressed a better understanding of vaccination and de-worming protocol with plans to utilize what they learned on their own farm operations. Having producers in the three county area that had a better understanding of best management practices and with a knowledge of how to use different working facilities and methods, they were able to show the public that their producers were invested in providing the public with a product that they could feel confident and comfortable buying, knowing that the producers raised the animal in a humane and healthy way.

(l) CRD and Natural Resources included work with 816 through Annual Conservation Field Days with the schools, Community Exercise Training and Wildlife and Resource Management.

(m) The Annual Conservation Field Day requested that Jackson Extension be a presenter for 2018 field days and teach "weather" because weather was a core curriculum study during 5th grade in NC. CED taught weather forecasting basics to about 350 5th grade students. The teachers were very pleased with the presentation.

(n) Administratively it was a big year for Jackson Extension since it moved to a nice new office in May and with the move it required much energy from staff to get settled and host an open house for the public and a Farmers Breakfast in June. Jackson ALS met once in April, 2018 to have a regular meeting with agents and their work, along with being trained in Civil Rights and to give feedback to the Community Needs Assessment. TEconomy for Jackson was completed in August and the Agents attended the NCEE Annual Conference in November. All Jackson Extension Staff received training in Civil Rights and the Canity Customer Service. CED was trained in Management Essentials in November.

(o) Volunteer Management had 108 volunteers with 387 hours that benefited 1,670 residents for a value \$9,555 to the county.

Informational item.

(8) OFFER TO PURCHASE - MURFELLO: Ms. Baker stated that the county had received an Offer to Purchase for Lot 140 Brooks Edge, Phase 7, River Rock a vacant property (PIN #7556-54-0730) from Ray and DeeAnna Murfello in the amount of \$3,000. The tax value was \$5,000 and the county had \$12,000 in the property due to the price of the lot from the initial sale and accumulated taxes.

Ms. Murfello stated that one reason they made the offer was because the lot was right behind their house. It was not an improved lot and had no well, septic or road. Other lots in that area had sold for \$3,000.

Ms. Baker stated if the offer was accepted, it would be advertised in the newspaper to start the upset bid process and they would also notify the neighbors.

Mr. Adams stated that this did meet the policy the Board adopted regarding how they disposed of property.

Motion: *Commissioner Mau moved to accept the offer and begin the upset bid process. Chairman McMahan seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARING FOR CELL TOWER APPLICATION: Mr. Poston stated they had a completed application for a proposed new wireless communication tower facility on Skyland Drive. They had been working with the applicant for a few years and they had now decided to move forward. Per the Wireless Communication Ordinance, any new wireless communication facility would require a quasi-judicial process through the Board of Commissioners. He requested that the Board set a Quasi-Judicial Hearing.

Motion: *Commissioner Mau moved to set a Quasi-Judicial Hearing for a cell tower application on February 26th at 1:00 pm. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) US 441 CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS:

Caroline Edmonds, Planner I, stated the US 441 Planning Council and the Planning Staff worked on amendments to Article V Character Areas, Section 5.4 Use and Design Standards of the US 441 Development Ordinance. The proposed amendment would allow “camp, campground” as a permitted use in the Planned Residential District. The US 441 Planning Council held a public hearing on October 15, 2018 and recommended approval of these amendments to the Planning Board. The Planning Board reviewed the amendment on December 13, 2018 and recommended approval to the Board of Commissioners. Both the US 441 Planning Council and the Planning Board found the amendment to be consistent with a land use goal identified in the Land Development Plan.

A public hearing was held prior to this meeting with no public comment. The Planning Department requested consideration of the text amendment and Statement of Consistency.

Motion: *Commissioner Deitz moved to adopt the US 441 Corridor Development Ordinance Text Amendments and Statement of Consistency, as presented. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) PLANNING BOARD: *Carry over.*

(12) REGION A AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Motion: *Commissioner Luker moved to reappoint Helen Bryson to serve another three year term on the Region A Aging Advisory Council, term to expire on March 02, 2022. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(13) US 441 GATEWAY DISTRICT COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL:

Carry over.

(14) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

(15) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: *Commissioner Deitz 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)(6) Personnel. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

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

There being no further business, Commissioner Deitz moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman