

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
DECEMBER 15, 2020**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on December 15, 2020, 1:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Tom Stribling, 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: CDBG Public Hearings. Commissioner Woody moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Woody moved to approve the minutes of a Regular Meeting of December 01, 2020 and an Organizational Meeting of December 07, 2020, as presented. Chairman McMahan seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CONSENT AGENDA**:

(a) Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the Finance Report for November, 2020, for approval.

(b) Brandi Henson, Tax Collector, presented the Tax Collector and Refund Reports for November, 2020, for approval.

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

(4) **MID-YEAR FUNDING ADJUSTMENTS AND COUNTY EMPLOYEE BONUSSES**: Mr. Adams stated that the following information was discussed at the last work session:

(a) It was proposed that the Board of Commissioners fund the following proposals:

- Provide a COLA to all county employees.
- Provide a one-time bonus to all public school certified teachers and other staff. In addition to this one-time bonus, it was recommended that the Board of Education develop a new teacher supplement program to be presented to the Board of Commissioners during the FY 21-22 budget process.
- Provide an additional 2% funding increase to the Jackson County Libraries.
- Provide an additional 2% funding increase to Southwestern Community College.

Since the above proposals would be for ongoing expenses beyond the current fiscal year, it was recommended that they be funded through increased sales tax revenues. It was also proposed that the Board consider providing a one-time bonus to all full-time and permanent part-time county employees. The only difference in the information presented at the work session was the 2% Cost of Living Adjustment to begin December 21, 2020 was shown as \$201,084.50 and was now \$202,464.00.

(b) FY 2020-2021 Mid-Year Funding Summary:

Cost of Living Adjustment	6 months	Annual
2% Cost of Living Adjustment to begin December 21, 2020 (pay date 01/08/2021)	\$202,464.00	\$404,928.00
Public Schools One-time Bonus - Certified and Non-certified \$500 each. This allocation was in lieu of a 2% general increase. The Board of Education would develop a new teacher supplement program that included these additional funds to be presented to the Board of Commissioners in the FY 21-22 budget process.	\$359,000.00	\$359,000.00
2% of Prior Year Budget		
Fontana Regional Library 2% adjustment to FY 2020 Budget	\$23,098.16	\$23,098.16
Southwestern Community College 2% adjustment to FY 2020 Budget	\$41,019.80	\$41,019.80
Total Mid-Year Adjustments	\$625,581.96	\$828,045.96

(c) County Share of Sales Tax Revenue:

FY 2019-2020	Budget		
Article 39	\$6,126,739.00		
Article 40	\$2,168,591.00		
Article 42	<u>\$1,145,732.00</u>		
	\$9,441,062.00		
FY 2019-2020	Actual		
Article 39	\$6,614,083.70		
Article 40	\$2,080,344.76		
Article 42	<u>\$1,353,611.39</u>		
	\$10,048,039.85		
FY 2020-2021	Budget	7%	9%
Article 39	\$6,004,204.00	\$420,294.28	\$540,378.36
Article 40	\$2,125,219.00	\$148,765.33	\$191,269.71
Article 42	<u>\$1,122,817.00</u>	<u>\$78,597.19</u>	<u>\$101,053.53</u>
	\$9,252,240.00	\$647,656.80	\$832,701.60

(d) County Employee Bonuses:

CAPACITY	
Covid Reimbursement Public Safety Salaries	
Contingency	\$909,255.00
FUNDING	
\$100 per month to full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees to be paid on December 18, 2020 10 months \$1,000 max, 387 full-time, 16 part-time	<u>\$413,483.65</u>
Balance - Contingency	\$495,771.35

Mr. Adams stated that he thought this would appropriately show appreciation to the employees. He thanked the employees for all the work they had been doing and would continue to do throughout the year. He also thought this was a great opportunity for the Board to start going down the path for teacher supplements and recognizing the good work of the school system.

(e) Budget Amendments: Ms. Fox presented eight Budget Ordinance Amendments for fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, for the above-referenced proposals.

Motion: *Commissioner Deitz moved to approve the eight Budget Amendments, as presented. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Motion: *Commissioner Stribling moved to approve the Mid-Year Funding Adjustments and the County Employee Bonuses, as presented. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Chairman McMahan stated that he thought it was a great opportunity to recognize the hard work of not only county employees, but also other various individuals. It had been a trying year and they were not out of it yet. They appreciated all of the hard work employees had done and continued to do.

(5) CDBG PUBLIC HEARINGS: Mr. Adams stated that the county initially received a \$1 million-dollar Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to assist with water and sewer for Blue Ridge School. They also received an additional \$280,000 in funding from CDBG to help with the project. The \$280,000 came from two other fiscal years of the CDBG Program and had to be treated separately from the \$1 million-dollar grant. They would have to reapply and hold public hearings for those funds.

He requested permission to schedule upcoming public hearings regarding the \$280,000 they were slated to receive from CDBG for the Blue Ridge water and sewer project. Generally, they would request specific dates, but at that point, they were still working on that information.

Motion: *Commissioner Woody moved to grant permission to schedule upcoming public hearings regarding the \$280,000 funds from CDBG. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(6) RESOLUTION SETTING REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE R20-26: Ms. Baker stated that the procedures the Board adopted at the organizational meeting and the North Carolina General Statutes stated that once the Board determined their meeting dates, it needed to be adopted by resolution.

The resolution stated that the Board would hold a regular meeting on the first Tuesday of each month beginning at 6:00 p.m. and the third Tuesday of each month beginning at 1:00 p.m. The Board would hold a work session on the second Tuesday of each month beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Motion: *Commissioner Deitz moved to adopt Resolution R20-26 Setting Regular Meeting Schedule, as presented. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(7) RESOLUTION DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO COUNTY MANAGER TO ACCEPT SIDEWALK OWNERSHIP AND MAINTENANCE – CASHIERS SIDEWALKS R20-27: Michael Poston, Planning Director was present for this item.

Mr. Adams presented a map showing the only change since this was presented at the work session. The change extended the area to include what they knew would be for future design of sidewalks.

Mr. Poston stated that also, instead of calling them Phase One and Phase Two, they named it “Modified Public Sidewalk Plan”. The plan shows the corridors that sidewalks would most commonly be on, which was public or DOT right-of-ways. The resolution gave the County Manager authority to sign third party encroachment agreements to maintain the sidewalks when appropriate.

Mr. Adams stated that this resolution authorized the County Manager to proceed forward with these agreements, but it would always be with staff input to make sure whatever was being proposed to the county would fit within the recommendations.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to adopt Resolution R20-27 Delegating Authority to County Manager to Accept Sidewalk Ownership and Maintenance, as presented. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion.*

Discussion:

Commissioner Woody inquired about the sidewalks in design, had the money already been provided for those pieces from DOT?

Mr. Poston stated that Vision Cashiers was working with property owners and were self-funding. DOT would not pay for sidewalks outside of actual road projects.

Mr. Adams stated that the county was not actually paying to build the sidewalks. It was either the private developer or through Vision Cashiers.

Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(8) ARGICULTURAL ADVISORY: *Carry over.*

Mr. Adams noted for the new Commissioners that when a new board member was recommended to a board or advisory committee for appointment, they would need to complete a volunteer application. The application would then be submitted to the Clerk, who would work with Human Resources to go through a background check process. It was the current policy and he recommended they work with the Clerk and county staff prior to bringing the name for nomination during a meeting.

Commissioner Deitz noted that Rebecca Fortner was no longer the ex-officio member on the Agricultural Advisory Board.

(9) AIRPORT AUTHORITY: Chairman McMahan stated that Commissioner Jones had served on the Airport Authority for some time and was eligible for reappointment. John Glenn's seat was also eligible for reappointment.

Commissioner Jones stated that he was happy to continue serving as Chairman of the Airport Authority. Mr. Glenn had also stated that he would continue to serve.

Motion: *Commissioner Woody moved to reappoint Mark Jones and John Glenn to additional six-year terms on the Airport Authority, terms expiring December 31, 2026. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE: *Carry over.*

(11) CULLOWHEE PLANNING COUNCIL: *Carry over.*

(12) HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: *Carry over.*

(13) PLANNING BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Woody moved to reappoint Kirk Shufelt, Tamera Crisp, Emily Moss and Mark Letson to additional two-year terms and to appoint Ollin Dunford to a two-year term on the Planning Board, terms expiring December 31, 2022. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(14) PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to appoint Rebekkah Watkins to a three-year term on the Public Library Board, term expiring December 31, 2023. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(15) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Dale Collins to an additional three-year term, expiring December 04, 2023; to appoint Daniel Fletcher to an unexpired seat expiring December 02, 2022; to appoint Scott Greene and Craig Smith to three-year terms expiring December 02, 2023 on the Tourism Development Authority. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to appoint Robert Jumper as Chair of the Tourism Development Authority for a one-year term. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(16) TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD: *Carry over.*

(17) AUDIT REPORT FY19-20: Matt Braswell of Martin, Starnes & Associates, presented:
2020 Audited Financial Statements:

(a) Audit Highlights:

- Unmodified opinion
- Cooperative staff
- 2020 Property tax revenues: \$36,910,768
- 2020 Collection rate: 98.13%
- 2019 Property tax revenues: \$36,429,809
- 2019 Collection rate: 97.88%

(b) General Fund Summary:

- 2020 Revenues: \$73,044,734
- 2020 Expenditures: \$68,318,861
- 2019 Revenues: \$70,127,859
- 2019 Expenditures: \$65,696,344

(c) Fund Balance: Serves as a measure of the county's financial resources available. Five classifications of governmental fund balances:

- Non-spendable. Not in cash form.
- Restricted. External restrictions (laws, grantors).
- Committed. Internal constraints at the highest (Board) level does not expire, requires Board action to undo.
- Assigned. Internal constraints, lower level than committed.
- Unassigned. No external or internal constraints.

(d) Total Fund Balance General Fund

- 2018: \$32,829,478
- 2019: \$27,088,706
- 2020: \$29,353,090
- Increase in unassigned Fund Balance: \$1,817,667
- Unassigned Fund Balance 2020: 27.2%
- Unassigned Fund Balance 2019: 23.4%

- (e) Top Three Sources of Income:
 - Property Tax:
 - 2020: \$36,910,768
 - 2019: \$36,429,809
 - Other Taxes and License:
 - 2020: \$16,561,509
 - 2019: \$15,240,353
 - Restricted Intergovernmental:
 - 2020: \$7,592,578
 - 2019: \$6,947,839
- (f) Top Three Expenditures:
 - Public Safety:
 - 2020: \$17,167,722
 - 2019: \$16,152,094
 - Human Services:
 - 2020: \$16,238,931
 - 2019: \$15,633,456
 - General Government:
 - 2020: \$12,305,301
 - 2019: \$11,273,235

Motion: *Commissioner Deitz moved to accept the Audit Report, as presented. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion.*

Discussion:

Chairman McMahan stated he thought it was important to note and for them to reflect on, that this was a very strong, positive view of where they were as a county financially. He thought that said a lot about their ability to have managed this crisis and pandemic, as well as the other routine, day to day operations. Staff had done a really good job. As Commissioners, he thought they also had to give themselves credit for having put together a budget and plan. It was a joint effort on all fronts and they had a lot to be positive about when looking at the audit report

Commissioner Woody stated that she appreciated that Mr. Braswell mentioned in the report that Ms. Fox had done such an outstanding job and they appreciated that as well.

Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(18) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Adams reported:

(a) November 2020 Zoning and Building Permits: He provided a report that listed the zoning district (if applicable), the owner/business name, the work permitted and the location of the project where the permit was issued. The Planning Department issued three commercial zoning permits in the month of November. Code Enforcement issued two commercial permits and three renovation/addition permits in the month of November.

(b) Community Services Center: Permitting and Code Enforcement issued a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy and the furniture install would be completed on December 16th. The Health Department would move into the facility the week of January 4th-8th and would be officially closed for the move. Permitting and Code Enforcement would move into the facility on January 11th-12th and the Sylva operations would be closed for the move. The Planning Department would move into the facility the week of January 11th-15th.

(c) **Other Major Construction Projects**

- Animal Rescue Center/Green Energy Park: All contracts were signed and the project was proceeding forward. Discussions regarding the kilns would be held during the January 12th work session.
- Indoor Pool: Items such as a resolution certifying the election results, architect/engineering contracts, a budget amendment and a reimbursement resolution would be presented to the Board at the January 12th work session.
- Blue Ridge School Water and Sewer Project: The notice to proceed date was December 7th.

(d) **NCDOT Honorary Road Designation “Beloved Man, Dr. Jerry Wolfe Highway”**: On December 2nd, the North Carolina Board of Transportation approved the honorary designation of US 441 from Exit 74 to the intersection of NC 19 as the “Beloved Man, Dr. Jerry Wolfe Highway”.

Commissioner Woody stated that the letter from DOT stated there could be a dedication ceremony if the county or family desired to have one. She discussed this with Chairman McMahan and Dr. Jerry Wolfe’s family and they definitely wanted to have a celebration to include Tribal Members, the Stick Ball Team and the VFW that Dr. Jerry Wolfe was part of. They may want to look at spring for that.

(19) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

(a) Commissioner Jones stated that it was good to see the tax rate up. That was probably as high as he recalled seeing it as a Commissioner. He wished everyone a merry Christmas and to have safe and blessed holidays

(b) Commissioner Stribling wished everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. He was looking forward to a happy new year.

(c) Commissioner Woody wished everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

(d) Commissioner Deitz stated that as a county, he did not know if there was anything they could do to assist the nursing homes. He read an article in AARP about an in-depth study of what had happened with the virus. It was breathtaking what had happened with the older citizens in the nursing homes. 40% of the people that had died were in a nursing home. The whole country had let down those people. It was a good article to read. He wished everyone a good holiday.

(20) **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:** Chairman McMahan stated it was very important and he appreciated Commissioner Deitz mentioning that. They were in a critical time as the numbers had risen in Covid cases. They had seen a drastic spike. They had stated that a lot of what they were seeing was attributable to Thanksgiving celebrations where people gathered when maybe they should not have.

The message they would leave with the public was to do not let their guard down. They were very much still in the middle of the pandemic. During the holidays it was a time they wanted to celebrate and be with family and friends and be thankful for all they had been blessed with, but they needed to do so in a smart way that protected the health and safety of all those around them. Sometimes people may be asymptomatic and not know they were spreading it.

The nursing homes and health care facilities were the front line of the battle. He encouraged everyone to remember those folks in their thoughts and prayers. He reminded people to be vigilant about hand washing and social distancing, especially if they were shopping or at holiday gatherings. He encouraged everyone to wear their masks as much as possible.

He knew the vaccine was out and being distributed. They heard that it would be in Jackson County the next week. Personally, he fully planned to take the vaccine as soon as it was available. That was a decision every individual needed to make for their own selves and for their families, but he thought the vaccine was safe. He had not seen anything to prove otherwise. He encouraged anyone that could to take it because they had to get at least 75% of the population vaccinated in order for it to be effective and create herd immunity to minimize the threat to those that did not take it.

This had been a tough year, a hard year and none of them would have ever imagined it. He was so thankful for all the hard work of county staff and the Board. He wished a happy Hanukkah, happy holidays, merry Christmas and happy New Year to everyone.

(21) **INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC**: None.

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

There being no further business, Commissioner Deitz moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman