

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
MAY 04, 2021**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on May 04, 2021, 6:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman	Don Adams, County Manager
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair	Heather C. Baker, County Attorney
Mark Jones, Commissioner, (via speakerphone)	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board
Tom Stribling, Commissioner	
Gayle Woody, Commissioner	

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WEEK AND PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL DAY PROCLAMATION:** Law Enforcement representatives from the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Sylva Police Department, Western Carolina University Police and North Carolina Highway Patrol, were present for this item.

Commissioner Stribling read a Proclamation declaring May 9th -15th as Law Enforcement Officers Week and May 15th as Peace Officers Memorial Day. Commissioner Deitz moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Sheriff Hall expressed appreciation for the support from the county and surrounding communities. As part of National Police Week, on May 14<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the Sheriff's Office would be holding a blood drive. Anyone donating would receive a free t-shirt and \$20 would be donated to the annual "Shop with a Cop" event, which helped under privileged children in the county.

(2) **PROCLAMATION HONORING OLDER AMERICANS:** Eddie Wells, Department on Aging Director, was present for this item.

Commissioner Woody read a Proclamation to proclaim May as Older Americans Month. Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Wells stated he appreciated all of the support from the county. They were working to potentially reopen during the first couple of weeks in June. Shelley Carraway, Health Director, had given them approval if things changed with the Governor's order on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Also, they did have a major water leak in the facility and were waiting for carpet and flooring to be installed.

They were continuing to operate and serve with drive-through and appointments. They were hopeful to open soon to include a split of congregate dining and drive-through. Also, the adult day program would be opening back with some activities. This was contingent upon the Governor's order releasing some restrictions that were in place on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**(3) PROCLAMATION FOR PURPLE HEART COUNTY:** Sheila Setzer, Veteran Services Officer and Wendy Smith, Veteran Services Assistant, were present for this item.

Commissioner Deitz read a Proclamation to declare Jackson County as a Purple Heart County. Commissioner Stribling moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Ms. Setzer stated they were still seeing the veterans and had been nonstop since they reopened in May. Keller-Williams Real Estate wanted to partner with the Veteran's Office for their "Red Day" community service. They would be doing a bag lunch on Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup> as a drive-through at the Department on Aging for all veterans. Also, they were hoping to get the annual picnic event started back. She thanked the Board for their support over the years.

Commissioner Deitz stated he thought it was awesome that they had people that cared.

Commissioner Woody stated that she appreciated that through Covid they went ahead and celebrated the Veteran's Dinner, which was drive-through, but was a great celebration. Also, they had gave out honor quilts and were serving the veterans.

**(4) AGENDA:** Mr. Adams noted that Tony Elders, Permitting and Code Enforcement Director, would not be able to attend the meeting to present the Fireworks Display Request item. He would present the item instead.

Commissioner Woody moved to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**(5) MINUTES:** Commissioner Deitz moved to approve the minutes of a Work Session of April 13, 2021 and a Regular Meeting of April 20, 2021, as presented. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

**(6) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** None.

**(7) COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

**(a)** Commissioner Stribling reported that he attended his first drug awareness rally in the county on Saturday. This was one of many more to come and it was a real success. They had several good speakers with a lot of them being ex-addicts now living normal lives. He had also been in contact with Sheriff Hall on what they could see more of on the opioid problem that was going on. He thought it was time to address it before it got out of control.

**(b)** Commissioner Woody stated she participated in the Board of Health meeting Monday evening. They received excellent reports from Ms. Carraway. The vaccination rate in the county was very good compared to the other counties in the state. They were in the top tier as far as percentages and they were very pleased about that. That day was the last mass vaccination as they were going to appointments at the health department from there on. The appointments would be offered on Thursdays and Fridays.

Also, they recognized Melissa McKnight, Deputy Health Director. Unfortunately, she would be moving and they would be losing her. They were very sad about that as she had served the county so well. They all appreciated her and the work she had done.

**(c)** Commissioner Deitz stated that it was Teacher Appreciation Week in the nation. He wanted to shout out a huge thanks to all of the teachers. Teachers had gone through probably the toughest situation any teachers had ever gone through in the history of the country. For them to have held up and to have done the things they had to in order to make their classes special was heartwarming. On behalf of the Commissioners, he wanted to thank all of the teachers in the county for what they were doing and would continue to do.

**(8) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:** Mr. Adams reported:

**(a) March 2021 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 four commercial zoning permits and one renovation/addition zoning permit in the month of March. Code enforcement issued six commercial permits and one renovation/addition permit in the month of March.

**(b) Construction Projects**

- Animal Rescue Center/Green Energy Park: The project was 11% complete with substantial completion projected to be January, 2022. Demolition was complete and the contractor was continuing to work on grading and installing storm sewer. The Underground water/sewer and electrical conduit lines were installed and the contractor should begin working on retaining walls in May. The animal rescue building construction should begin sometime in June to July. He provided the latest field report.
- Blue Ridge School Water and Sewer Project: The project was 80% complete with a projected substantial completion date of June 25, 2021. He provided the latest progress report.
- The Fairview Concession Stand replacement project had started. He provided a projected schedule.

**(c) COVID-19 Vaccination Program:** He provided the following press release:

*“Since late December 2020, the Jackson County Department of Public Health (JCDPH) has worked diligently to offer COVID-19 vaccines to our community. JCDPH has worked with community partners such as Jackson County Emergency Management, Jackson County Department on Aging, Jackson County Government, Harris Regional Hospital, Harris EMS, National Guard, Community Care of North Carolina, and many others to provide 24 Drive Thru Clinics, to coordinate many special event clinics, and to administer over 14,300 COVID-19 vaccines.*

*“We are so proud of the work we have accomplished to increase access to vaccinations in our community,” said Health Director Shelley Carraway. “We couldn’t have done it without our community partnerships and volunteers.”*

*COVID-19 vaccine supply has increased dramatically since late 2020 and all adults now are eligible across the United States. Additional vaccine providers have been on boarded, further increasing access to vaccine. As a result, JCDPH will transition from offering COVID-19 vaccines via the drive thru clinic model to offering COVID-19 vaccines onsite at the Health Department (538 Scotts Creek Road) on April 29. To make an appointment, visit <http://health.jacksonnc.org/covid19>. For those in our community who need additional assistance, call 828-631-HELP for English or 828-587-8227 for Spanish.*

*Two (2) second dose clinics are already scheduled as Drive Thru Clinics at the Department on Aging on April 27 and May 4. These clinics will continue as Drive Thru Clinics at the Department on Aging as scheduled.*

*Note that other providers in our area are also offering the COVID-19 vaccine. For a full list of vaccine providers, visit <https://myspot.nc.gov/>.”*

Mr. Adams expressed appreciation for all who worked the mass vaccination clinics. Vaccinations were available at the Health Department, WCU and at pharmacies.

Commissioner Woody stated that the Health Board had a productive discussion with good input about how to overcome reluctance for vaccination. Ms. Carraway would be following through on some suggestions and she thought it would be a real positive thing.

- (d) Mr. Adams reminded the Board of the following upcoming meetings:
- Work Session – May 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Community Services Center Conference Room 243
  - Regular Meeting – May 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Justice Center Room A20
  - Special Budget Work Session – May 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. SCC Burrell Building
  - Special Budget Work Session – May 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. SCC Burrell Building
  - Special Budget Work Session – May 26<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. SCC Burrell Building
  - Special Budget Work Session – June 1<sup>st</sup> at 1:00 p.m. SCC Burrell Building
  - Public Hearing – Budget – June 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:55 p.m. Justice Center A201
  - Regular Meeting – June 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Justice Center A201

He would put the Budget Calendar on the agenda at the May 11<sup>th</sup> work session for review.

Commissioner Deitz asked if any advertising had been done to encourage people to get the vaccine? Mr. Adams stated that there was, including billboards with free advertising from Allison's. Commissioner Woody stated that all of the media outlets and social media had put things out. General discussions were held.

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

(10) **FIREWORKS DISPLAY REQUESTS:** Mr. Adams stated that Mr. Elders had requested approval for an application he received for a fireworks display for a wedding at Camp Merrie-Woode in Sapphire on the evening of Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup>.

***Motion:** Commissioner Jones moved to approve the request for a fireworks display, as presented. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) **PAY PLAN REVISIONS:** Kathleen Breedlove, Human Resources Director, presented the following revisions to portions of the Pay Policies:

“Direct Experience:

A new employee with direct experience may be hired at the step equivalent to the years of direct experience the employee has prior to hire. Any starting salary above minimum must be approved by a management team including the Human Resources Director and Finance Director prior to County Manager approval.

Direct experience is defined as the years of service in a comparable or related position for an entity that participates in the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System (LGERS) or North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System for Local Law Enforcement Officers (LGERS LEO).

An entity that participates in the North Carolina Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System (TSERS), or with a federally recognized Indian Tribe or federal agency is considered as indirect experience. On occasion, this indirect experience may be viewed as direct experience in the salary calculation when the management team and the County Manager take into account the level of expert knowledge, skills and abilities the new hire acquired through such prior employment relative to the position for which they are being hired to fill. Any starting salary above minimum must be approved by a management team including the Human Resources Director and Finance Director prior to County Manager approval.”

“Indirect Experience:

A new employee with indirect experience may be hired at a step equivalent to a portion of the indirect experience the employee has prior to hire following the below formula. When calculation results in partial number or decimal, the amount should be rounded down to the nearest whole number to determine Step, with the exception of an employee with eligible service above one year, but less than two years, the indirect experience may be rounded up so that the employee may begin at a starting salary calculated at Step 2.

# of years of indirect experience x 25% + 1 = Step

Indirect experience is defined as the years of service in a comparable or related position for an entity who does not participate in LGERS ~~which may to~~ include employers of the private sector, non-profits, ~~North Carolina Teachers’ and State Employees’ Retirement System (TSERS)~~, and volunteer fire departments and rescue squads. Employees coming from an entity who participates in TSERS must have creditable service in the system that is transferrable to LGERS.”

***Motion:** Commissioner Deitz moved to approve the Pay Plan Revisions, as presented. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(12) JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL (JCPC):** Heather Baker, JCPC Chair presented selected programs, certification, membership list and proposed funding for FY21-22. Total funding was \$128,439 with an additional required local match of \$54,920, which included the rent of the space from the county as an in-kind donation.

Ms. Baker stated that regarding the JCPC Membership, Commissioner Deitz was the Commissioners’ representative on JCPC. The members decided how the funds were used through an RFP process. Program Providers were as follows:

- HIGHTS-COMPASS: \$112,934
- Jackson JCPC Administration: \$784
- Mountain Mediation: \$30,610
- Hawthorne Heights: \$34,345

Commissioner Jones stated that he spent ten years on JCPC. It amazed him that the cost of one youth to go to juvenile detention was \$100,000. The \$54,920 requested helped keep youth out of juvenile detention and went toward great programming that he supported and could not speak more highly of.

***Motion:** Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Programs, Certification, Membership List, Funding Plan and for Chairman McMahan to execute the Certification Standards, to include a match of \$54,920.00. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Commissioner Deitz stated that they were very aware of a lot of things that Ms. Baker did. She put a lot of work into it and this was very complicated with a lot of people involved. She did an excellent job and he thanked her.

Commissioner Woody stated that she thought this was one of the programs that really did help with crime prevention. This program gave young people a chance to learn job skills, finish their education and have supervision that they lacked in their lives earlier. It was a wonderful program.

Ms. Baker stated that it was the program that deserved the thanks, they did wonderful things.

Commissioner Woody stated that previously, they approved the opportunity for HIGHTS to purchase property that the county owned at Chipper Curve and Allen Street. Did that go through?

Ms. Baker stated that it was still pending as it had title problems. They were still working on that and were hopeful it would be resolved.

**(13) AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD:** Ms. Baker stated that a suggestion had been made to Barry Stevens, Soil and Water Director, to possibly change the ordinance to make it easier to fill the positions on the board. They were going to discuss this at the next meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Board and possibly make a request to the Commissioners.

*Carry over.*

**(14) CASHIERS PLANNING COUNCIL:** *Carry over.*

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

**(16) CLOSED SESSION:**

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Deitz moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(3) Legal, G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel and G.S.143-318.11(a)(7) Criminal Investigations. Commissioner Woody 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 Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

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Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman