

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
AUGUST 02, 2022**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on August 02, 2022, 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	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
	Tom Stribling, Commissioner	
Absent:	Gayle Woody, Commissioner	

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **AGENDA**: Chairman McMahan requested to remove one item: Fireworks Display Request; and to add one item: Youth Leadership Council. Commissioner Jones moved to approve the amended agenda. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Chairman McMahan noted that Commissioner Woody was absent as she was attending the UNC School of Government's Advanced Leadership Training.

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Stribling moved to approve the minutes of a Work Session of July 12, 2022 and a Regular Meeting of July 19, 2022, as presented. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

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

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**:

(a) Commissioner Jones stated that he received information from Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director, regarding tourism numbers. Three years ago, the number of vacation rental homes in the online rental pool was just over 300. They were now at 990 in that accommodation pool. In 2016, the 4% occupancy tax on vacation home rentals was 20%. In 2021 it had increased to 62%.

In just a few years, they could see the increase of those homes and the revenue they had generated, which included shopping, gas, etc. Tourism had taken a big hold on the county and increased their economy over the last two years significantly. Mr. Breedlove would present a full report to the Board in the next few months.

(b) Commissioner Deitz stated that he and Mr. Adams visited the Animal Rescue Center that week. It was interesting how far they had come and they still had a distance to go. He had not been there since they started construction and he appreciated Mr. Adams taking him to show him around.

(5) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT**: Mr. Adams stated that they were still accepting applications for the Citizens Academy. The application could be found on the county website at [www.jacksonnc.org](http://www.jacksonnc.org) and the deadline was August 11<sup>th</sup>. He invited the Commissioners to join in the first meeting on September 8<sup>th</sup> to help kick off the Academy.

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

**(7) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION REQUEST:** Rob Hawk, Cooperative Extension Director, stated that the 2022 North Carolina state budget provided for a 3.5% across the board, mandatory salary increase for eligible, permanent SHR, EHRA non-faculty employees. The state increase was retroactively effective July 1, 2022.

There was a partnership between the county and state where 50% of the salaries came from the universities and 50% came from the county. He requested that the county match the 3.5% of the county's 50% portion, for a total annual increase of \$3,941 to the county.

Mr. Adams stated that the funds would come from the salary contingency line item.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Deitz moved to grant the 3.5% increase match on the county portion, as requested. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(8) YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL:** Caleb Phillips of the 4-H Youth Leadership Council and Heather Gordon, 4-H Youth Development, were present for this item.

Chairman McMahan stated that for the past seven years, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners had partnered with 4-H. Ms. Gordon worked locally with the youth to have a Youth Leadership Council in the county.

When the county commissioners from across the state convened for their annual conference, the youth from each county would also meet to participate in the Youth Leadership Council. There were interactions between the two groups during that time. It was a great opportunity and a great program. They were very fortunate to have one of Jackson County's youth with them, who was participating in the program.

Mr. Phillips stated that he would be attending the Commissioners' meeting in Concord in the next few weeks. He represented Jackson County's 4-H Youth Leadership Council as one of the co-presidents. He wanted to discuss a topic with the Commissioners that he believed was important and impacted the community.

For the past several years, he had been deeply involved in running. He personally found it important, as did a number of cross country and track programs at Smoky Mountain High School. A topic surrounding these programs was the current state of the track. The track at Smoky Mountain High School was 350 meters and made out of cracked asphalt and there were often complaints about the track not being regulation size.

Western Carolina University had their track resurfaced and it became a great place for the community to walk, run and workout. For years, the track condition at the high school had not allowed for meets at the high school, which contributed to the lack of a track program in the area. This had led to a general lack of business in the county since there was a lack of teams coming into the county and spending more time.

They had the space for a new track near the new gym. This had been a problem for decades in the county with the track. He felt it could bring in a lot of positive impacts to the community through having a new space for the community to come to work out in a safe environment. It would also boost morale in the cross-country and track programs to have a space to work out efficiently.

Chairman McMahan stated that Mr. Phillips was very accurate in his portrayal of the issues and problems with the current status of the track. The Board had been looking at this issue with the Smoky Mountain High School Master Plan to try and create a new track. They were hopeful to see this in the future. It was a deficiency that needed to be corrected to encourage enthusiasm and interest in the track and field program, so all students had the same kind of opportunities.

Commissioner Deitz stated they had done a lot of different things over the years to try and upgrade the track, but it was at a point where it could not be upgraded. It needed to be a full 400-meter track and hopefully, they could do that. He appreciated Mr. Phillips bringing it to their attention again. It was something they were aware of.

Commissioner Jones thanked Mr. Phillips for providing a student and athlete perspective. So often in the budget meetings with Board of Education Members and School Officials, they heard from an adult perspective. It was refreshing to hear from a student.

Commissioner Stribling thank Mr. Phillips for speaking up.

Mr. Adams let Mr. Phillips know that the Board of Commissioner meetings were lives-streamed and there would be meeting on August 9<sup>th</sup> with school officials where they would be discussing capital projects, including this topic.

Ms. Gordon stated that the Youth Leadership Council was a group of teenagers in the community. If the Board had questions for youth in the community, they could contact this group to speak or answer questions.

Commissioner Deitz asked Ms. Gordon to share about a recent 4-H event visiting local farms.

Ms. Gordon stated that two weeks ago, they worked with 4-H programs in Macon and Swain Counties on a Farm to Fork Program. They spent time in Jackson County looking at Christmas tree farming and bee farming. They went to a beef farm in Macon County and had hamburgers for lunch. They also visited a goat farm to learn how to milk a goat.

The last day, they went to Darnell Farms in Swain County and got a great tour on vegetable gardening. They ended the day planting beans in a Cherokee garden. The idea was to connect with lots of different types of agriculture. It was a great event and it was a really good program. They had 15 kids from Jackson County participate.

*Informational item.*

**(9) OFFER TO PURCHASE AND CONTRACT FROM COX AND RESOLUTION**

**R22-16:** Ms. Baker presented an offer she received from Jacob Cox for Lot 49, Enchanted Forest, containing 2.26 acres, (PIN #7517-71-5216) in Savannah Township for \$2,000.00. If approved, they would send letters to all of the adjoining property owners. This would also be published in the newspaper for the upset bid process.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Deitz moved to approve Resolution R22-16, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(10) GLENVILLE-CASHIERS RESCUE SQUAD RESOLUTION R22-17:**

Ms. Baker stated that in November of 2020, the Board considered and approved a similar resolution for the Cashiers-Glenville Fire Department when they were getting a loan. This resolution was required by the lender, which was the same lender the Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad was using for their new building.

The resolution would be approval for the loan of \$4.6 million to build a new rescue squad building. It specifically stated that this did not obligate the county in any financial way. It was for approval and to show the county had an ongoing contract with the Rescue Squad to provide the service.

Mr. Adams stated that the debt service payment that the Board approved in the budget process was in the budget and they were prepared to move forward with the payment reimbursements.

**Motion:** *Commissioner Jones moved to approve Resolution R22-17, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

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

There being no further business, Commissioner Stribling moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

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Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman