

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
JANUARY 18, 2022**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on January 18, 2022, 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 the Board

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **AGENDA**: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Woody moved to approve the minutes of a Regular Meeting of January 04, 2022, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman McMahan reported that he and Mr. Adams attended the first meeting of the new Regional Vaya Board. There were good discussions and review of the new bylaws. Ronnie Beale, Macon County Commissioner, was overwhelmingly selected as the Chair of the Regional Advisory Board. Commissioner Beale had a long history of service in the region on the mental health issue. Also, Ira Dove, Director of Haywood County Health and Human Services, was selected as Vice Chair. Mr. Dove also had a long history in the region on mental health issues. They would begin meeting quarterly in March.

He also wanted to extend his appreciation to all County Staff, State Employees, DOT, utility crews, Duke Energy and all of the various emergency services. The storm event they just came out of could have been a lot worse. There were some high snow totals in some parts of the county, but for the most part, it seemed to be a fairly quiet event. He appreciated all the hard work and effort by all those who do so on a regular basis and when called upon. He noted that he did sign the Termination of the Declaration of State of Emergency, which would go into effect as of 4:00 p.m. that day.

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**:

(a) Commissioner Woody extended her appreciation to the Emergency Management team, Mr. Adams and all who worked so hard. She thought Duke Energy went to great lengths over the past year to clear lines and she thought that really made an impact. She appreciated their efforts before the storm as those prevention efforts were important.

Also, she participated in the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Environmental Committee. She learned that the American Rescue Plan gave the state funds and there would be \$1.6 billion of grants going to counties. A total of \$100 million would go toward a new category of "Waste Water Treatment and Storm Water Treatment", which the county could apply for. There was also another pot of money in the Infrastructure Bill to replace lead pipes.

The last part was about roadside litter. They did not discuss anything that the county was not already doing, so the county should just keep on with its efforts. The problem did not go away, but they could make it less of a problem. In 2021, the state contractors picked up 13,017,720 pounds of litter in the state. They all needed to be examples of taking care of their community.

(b) Commissioner Jones thanked County Staff, First Responders and Duke Energy. They had a very fast response time to outages and he appreciated them bringing in extra crews from other states to assist. It was a relatively quiet event in the southern end of the county, compared to what it could have been. It was a very heavy, wet, dense snow with wind.

(c) Commissioner Stribling thanked all the First Responders, Sheriff's Office, Police Department and everyone that helped. It was a great team effort.

(d) Commissioner Deitz stated that he visited Hawthorn Heights in Bryson City to perform an audit of the program. That was his first time at that location. It was awesome to listen to them and what they were doing. They operated a nine-bed facility that was usually full. One item that he thought the county could do to help them with immediately was a place to store their trash outside. It was a very good visit and he appreciated what they were doing.

(5) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT:** Mr. Adams stated that he did not have a formal report. He would be moving his formal report to the first meeting of the month. All of the monthly meetings for the construction projects were after he reported to the Board, so he wanted to make that change.

He thanked Ms. Baker for working on the state of emergency over the weekend. Todd Dillard, Emergency Management Director, opened the Emergency Management Operations Center over the weekend and he thanked all of the volunteers from the Health Department and Social Services that manned the phone lines to provide information to the public at the Call Center. He also thanked the Rescue Squads and Fire Departments for responding on scene.

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

(7) **CONSENT AGENDA:**

(a) Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the Finance Report for December, 2021 and two Budget Ordinance Amendments for fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, for approval.

(b) Brandi Henson, Tax Collector, presented the Tax Collector and Refund Reports for December, 2021, for approval.

Commissioner Jones asked what were examples of why they would have the overpayment refunds?

Ms. Henson stated that it could be with escrow accounts where the bank paid the taxes and so did the citizen. They would then have to refund either the bank or the citizen. Another example would be if a property sold and the taxes were paid at closing and by the buyer or seller. Those were some examples of how the overpayments were created.

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

(8) **BROADBAND:** Tiffany Henry, Economic Development Director, presented: Broadband Update: Governor Cooper's plan invests \$1 billion of American Rescue Plan funds (and \$30 million of state funds) in the following areas to achieve digital equity in North Carolina

(a) Infrastructure \$971M: Ensure availability of internet speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps for 98% of North Carolina:

- \$380M: GREAT Grants
- \$400M: Completing access to Broadband (CAB) Program \*NEW

- \$90M: Stop gap solutions
- \$100M: Broadband Make Ready Accelerator (pole replacement)
- \$1M: Broadband mapping
- (b) Awareness and Digital Literacy: \$50M
- (c) Overview of Programs:
  - GREAT Grant:
    - Internet Provider's (ISP's) were applicants
    - Program guidelines role out 1/31
    - Applications due 4/4
    - Target less than 25:3
    - Currently no cap on aware amounts
  - \*NEW Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Program:
    - Partnership between the county and North Carolina Department of Information and Technology (NCDIT)
    - Joint RFP was expected to be needed
    - Mutually identify eligible/gap areas
    - Counties must provide some match funding
    - Start with a few pilot counties March/April

Mr. Adams stated that there were guaranteed funds coming to the county for the CAB Program. The GREAT Grant Program was driven by the internet provider. The provider would go to the state and apply for funds that made sense for them. With the CAB Program, it really was designed for the county to go through a process so that the county could prioritize where they wished to invest funds.

Ms. Henry continued:

(d) Initial Infrastructure Opportunities for Counties:

- GREAT Grant:
  - "Partnerships" with ISP, letter of support or possible matching funds to applicants
  - Highly competitive
  - Final guidelines from NCDIT available January 31<sup>st</sup>
- CAB Program:
  - The county and NCDIT bid out proposed project
  - Mutually identify target areas
  - Not all counties would go at the same time
  - Award would utilize county and state funds:
    - Each county had federal match of up to \$4M
    - Counties must provide some match funding
    - ARPA funds could be used as match funds

Mr. Adams stated that if the county provided matching funds to the applicant, there were strict guidelines of how they could fund these types of projects. They were required to go out for request for proposals. If they did not have a priority list, it would make it difficult to go out for request for proposals. The CAB Program was specifically designed to take the county through a process so that they could decide where the priorities were and where the matching funds should be. That request for proposals would be detailed.

They knew there were local providers interested in the GREAT Grant Program. There was a limited set of resources from the county's end, which had not been decided. If the county moved forward with an RFP process with providers wanting the county to match funds, that could potentially limit the county's ability when they started talking about the CAB Program.

General discussions were held.

Ms. Henry continued:

(e) Public Wifi Project for Downtown Sylva: She was notified that Southwest Commission and Land of the Sky both received NC Connect Grants for their region. She reached out to the partners listed below and they were able to deploy public Wifi for downtown Sylva:

- Launched December 2021
- Partnership with:
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Southwestern Commission
  - SkyFi Inc
  - Balsam West
  - Tourism Development Authority
  - Town of Sylva
  - More than a dozen downtown Property Owners

(f) Broadband Survey located on the county homepage: [www.jacksonnc.org](http://www.jacksonnc.org). She encouraged everyone to complete a survey.

*Informational item.*

**(9) COOPERATIVE EXTENSION STATE RAISES – COUNTY MATCH:** Rob Hawk, Extension Director stated that as discussed at the work session, the state passed a salary increase of 2.5%. With Extension employees being state employees and matched 50/50, he requested the match on the county part for a total of \$2,323 annually. This would be retroactive to July 1, 2021 and go into effect in February.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Deitz moved to approve the Cooperative Extension State Raise County Match, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(10) MUNICIPAL GRANT APPLICATIONS:** Mr. Adams stated this was a follow up item from the work session. He presented:

- (a) Town of Sylva: Requested \$5,000.00 for Jackson Street sidewalk repairs.
- (b) Town of Dillsboro: Requested \$5,000.00 for public restroom renovations project.
- (c) Town of Webster: Requested \$4,873.70 for park equipment for JC BOE site.

Also, there would be some funds left over because they only had three of the four municipalities apply. At that point, he believed that it was agreed on that the remaining \$5,000 would be reserved until another project was identified.

Commissioner Jones requested that Mr. Adams communicate with the Town of Dillsboro that in the next couple of months, the TDA would have grant funding that entities could make requests for. There could be an opportunity for Dillsboro to request the remainder needed for the restrooms.

***Motion:*** *Commissioner Woody moved to approve the three Municipal Grant Applications, as presented. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(11) FY2022-2023 BUDGET CALENDAR:** Mr. Adams presented the Proposed FY2022-23 Budget Calendar:

January 11	Regular Commissioner Work Session – Set budget calendar- 1:00 pm
February 22	Commissioner’s Budget Retreat, location and meal TBD- 1:00 pm
February 28	Manager’s preliminary meeting with staff
March 1	Non – Profit Grant Applications Disseminated
March 10	Special Called Budget Meeting-Revenue Discussions- 1:00 pm
March 25	All requests submitted to Finance
March 31	Non – Profit Grant Applications Due
April 12	Regular Commissioner Work Session –summary of all new requests- 1:00 pm
April 18–April 29	Manager / Finance Budget Meeting with Departments & Agencies
May 10	Regular Commissioner Work Session – Capital Projects, update on new requests- 1:00 pm
May 17	Regular Commissioner Meeting – Manager’s Recommended Budget- 1:00 pm
May 19–May 20	Special called budget work sessions to hear presentations if needed (safety, education, non-profits, other departments) - 8:30 am – 1:00 pm
June 7	Regular Commissioner Meeting – Budget Public Hearing - 6:00 pm
June 9–10	Special called budget meetings as needed and regular work session (June 14 at 1:00 pm) to make final adjustments.
June 21	Adoption of budget- 1:00 pm

***Motion:*** Commissioner Woody moved to approve the FY2022-2023 Budget Calendar, as presented. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(12) 2021 UPDATED RETENTION SCHEDULES:** Ms. Baker stated that according to G.S.§121-5(b) and G.S.§132-3, public records may only be destroyed with the consent of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR). The State Archives of North Carolina was the division of DNCR charged with administering a records management program. The schedules were the primary way the State Archives of North Carolina gave its consent. Without approving the schedules, the agency was obligated to obtain the State Archives of North Carolina’s permission to destroy any record, no matter how insignificant. Following were the two schedules updated as of October 1, 2021:

- General Records Schedule: Local Government Agencies
- Program Records Schedule: Local Government Agencies

***Motion:*** Commissioner Woody moved to adopt 2021 Retention Schedules, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(13) PLANNING BOARD:** Carry over.

**(14) RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD:**

***Motion:*** Commissioner Stribling moved to appoint Mark Ellison to a three-year term on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(15) TUCKASEIGEE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY (TWSA):** Chairman McMahan stated that TWSA was a governmental institution formed several decades ago. It combined Sylva’s water-sewer district and the county to create a unified system that served several municipalities and county residents. There were three service districts that included Whittier, Sylva and Cashiers. The county had two appointments to this board that met monthly to oversee the wastewater treatment facilities, as well as the water plant. One of the county’s appointees, Mr. Tom Sawyer, was not able to serve again in this capacity.

He wished to nominate Mark Jones to serve as the county’s representative from the southern end of the county. He believed it was very important to have someone from that area on this board given the complexity of the Horsepasture Wastewater Treatment Facility. Commissioner Jones was on the TWSA Board at the time of that project and was very instrumental in helping to secure grants. Commissioner Jones had a long history with TWSA and he believed there was a lot of value in having someone with his experience serve on that board, as well as serve the constituents as a long-time resident of the Cashiers area.

***Motion:*** *Chairman McMahan moved to appoint Commissioner Jones to a three-year term on the Tuckasegee Water and Sewer Authority. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

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

There being no further business, Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

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Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman