

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
SEPTEMBER 07, 2021**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on September 07, 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	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board
	Tom Stribling, Commissioner	
	Gayle Woody, Commissioner	

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 Reconvened Regular Meeting (12:55 p.m.) of August 10, 2021; a Work Session of August 10, 2021; a Reconvened Regular Meeting (2:00 p.m.) of August 10, 2021; and a Regular Meeting of August 17, 2021, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

The Board took at ten-minute break.

Chairman McMahan called the meeting back to order.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman McMahan stated that an unprecedented event took place in neighboring counties in Western North Carolina. When they left the last Board meeting, the rains were falling and there were several emergency calls in place. Michael Forbis, Fire Marshal and Todd Dillard, Emergency Management Director, were scheduled to be at the last meeting, but were not able to attend due to preparations for Hurricane Fred. Since then, Hurricane Ida also moved through the area. There had been a significant amount of destruction in Haywood, Transylvania, Buncombe and Henderson Counties.

All of those folks were in their thoughts and prayers as they were their neighbors, family and friends. County staff assisted with recovery efforts, search and rescue efforts through the Emergency Management Office and Law Enforcement. Also, some county employees lived in those areas that met some of the destruction.

To all the folks that aided in those efforts on behalf of Jackson County, they very much appreciated their efforts and endeavors. They were still there and still finding ways to help. There were many charitable organizations available for financial contributions. They wanted to recognize all the effort that had gone forward and thank those that volunteered.

Commissioner Deitz stated there were several church groups going over to individual homes to help. If anyone wanted to volunteer, they could contact the United Methodist Church. They were going over on Friday to work. Now there was a stretch from New Orleans to New Jersey the same way. He read that 86% of citizens in America had, in some way, been affected by catastrophic weather, whether it be heat, floods, tornados or fires. They needed to feel so fortunate as not much had happened there.

(4) COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

(a) Commissioner Jones stated that he read a report stating that one in three counties in the United States had been affected by catastrophic fires, tornados or floods. It was hard to get a grasp on that. They should all address and think out of the box anyway they could to help their neighbors and to help their climate.

(b) Commissioner Woody stated that she was so proud of county staff that participated in the Greening Up the Mountains. Chad Parker, Public Works Director and Kim Shuler, Public Works, had a table at the event handing out literature about recycling. Also, Anna Harkin, Planning, had a table for Historic Preservation with a lovely display. There were also people from Soil and Water and the Greenway. She was proud the county had that much presence and provided information. She thought it showed the citizens they had agencies and staff that were very committed and that meant a lot. She thanked all that participated.

(5) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Adams stated that he had no formal report, but he wanted to announce that unfortunately, he did have to cancel the Citizens Academy due to concerns expressed from departmental operations regarding the Covid spike. Hopefully, they would be able to have the academy the next year.

(6) INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC: None.

(7) TRANSIT 5311 – CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRAM GRANTS PUBLIC HEARING: Norma Taylor, Transit Director, noted that Transit provided transportation at Greening Up the Mountains. She requested to be placed on the September 21st agenda to request board approval of a resolution to make application for the grants. A joint public hearing was acceptable for both applications.

These grants were made available annually through the state to assist transit systems with operating, administrative and capital funding. The 5311 program grant supported the director and assistant director's salaries and fringes, as well as administrative costs, such as office supplies, drug and alcohol testing, uniforms and marketing. The 5310 program supported operating costs for elderly and disabled transportations.

She requested to set a public hearing on September 21st at 12:55 p.m.

Motion: Commissioner Deitz moved to set a public hearing on September 21st at 12:45 p.m. for Transit 5311 – Capital Projects Program Grants. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Jones inquired about how Transit traveling to Cashiers was going?

Ms. Taylor stated that the most passengers they had on any given day was four. Blue Ridge School was as far as they had gone so far. They had posters they wanted to distribute to different places to let people know about it. They would also take out an ad in the paper. They were hopeful to get more riders interested in going into Cashiers. They would run it like they did trolley with specific places where they would pick people up.

(8) CDBG CLOSEOUT PUBLIC HEARING: Michael Poston, Planning Director, stated that the Blue Ridge School Water/Wastewater project made improvements to the school's water and wastewater systems. The water portion of the project consisted of modernizing the water system by replacing a 43-year-old 10,000-gallon elevated tank with a 5,000-gallon ground level storage and booster pump.

They were required to hold a public hearing to report the accomplishments of the grant and all of the work had been completed in a timely fashion and had been certified complete. In order to close out the grant by the end of September, a public hearing would need to be held on September 21st.

This scope was refined when the county was awarded additional funding in separate grant years and split the cost of the project between those additional grants. The final contract amount after all three change orders was \$1,315,738.65.

He requested to set a public hearing on September 21st at 12:45 p.m.

Motion: Commissioner Jones moved to set a public hearing on September 21st at 12:45 p.m. for CDBG Closeout. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(9) PEDESTRIAN AND GREENWAY PLANS: Mr. Poston stated that this item was on the July work session when Kristy Carter of Transportation Planning and Design, Inc., explained how the process would work. The final plan had been available for public view and they did receive a few minor comments from the public. They also received general feedback from NCDOT as part of the planning and approval process. None of the feedback received changed any of the recommendations or the process of the plan. As part of the grant project, they needed to bring this back before the Board to approve the plan.

Also, he wanted to address the project on Skyland Drive, which Commissioner Deitz had inquired about. His understanding was that the contract should be let in January, 2022 and the project should move forward.

General discussions were held.

Chairman McMahan asked if the Board approved the Plans, what would be the next step?

Mr. Poston stated that there were still a couple of steps on DOT's end. Previously, when sidewalks were being built, there would be a cost-share with local jurisdictions where DOT only paid for a portion. The new Complete Streets Policy of DOT stated that if the jurisdiction had a project in the pedestrian planning document, there would be a zero match from the community required, so this would help them with all of the pedestrian projects they had identified to move forward. They did have to go through the DOT prioritization process, but once it was completed, there would be no additional costs to the county. Also, staff could begin to work on a more robust policy for sidewalk maintenance and acceptance.

Chairman McMahan stated they had several weeks to review the plan, which was well put together.

Motion: Commissioner Deitz moved to approve the Pedestrian and Greenway Plans, as presented. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(10) CASHIERS-GLENVILLE VFD CONTRACT: Mr. Adams presented the proposed contract with the Cashiers-Glenville Volunteer Fire Department. The contract ended with the last fiscal year, so they had been operating on a continuation of that contract. He noted that the term of the contract would coincide with the county's revaluation year, which was June 30, 2025. Also, the county paid out the funds received from the fire service tax on a monthly basis and if there was a fund balance at the end of the year from that tax, it was placed in an account and rolled over to the next year. If the fire department had an additional need, they could come back to the Board to request the additional funds. Also, he noted they previously had a separate mutual aid agreement, but it had now been incorporated into the new contract.

Motion: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Cashiers-Glenville VFD Contract, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

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

(12) **CLOSED SESSION:**

Motion: *Commissioner Woody moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property and G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel. Commissioner Stribling 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 Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman