

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
JUNE 20, 2023**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on June 20, 2023, 6:30 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Mark A. Letson, Chairman
Todd Bryson, Vice Chair
Mark Jones, Commissioner
John W. Smith, Commissioner
Tom Stribling, Commissioner

Don Adams, County Manager
Debra Bechtel, Interim County Attorney, Via Zoom
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

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

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the minutes of a Special Budget Work Session of May 23, 2023; a Public Hearing (FY23-24 Budget) of June 06, 2023; and a Regular Meeting of June 06, 2023. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman Letson reported Congressman Chuck Edwards' mobile office, the Carolina Cruiser, would be at the Chamber of Commerce in Cashiers next Tuesday.

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**:

(a) Commissioner Jones stated he went by Mark Watson Park on Saturday and he was extremely proud to see how clean the restrooms were. His wife went into the ladies' room and they were very clean as well. Hats off to housekeeping.

(b) Commissioner Bryson thanked the Department on Aging and New Hope Baptist Church for building a ramp for his grandmother. He appreciated them and what they did.

(c) Commissioner Stribling stated the Department on Aging held their annual Elder Abuse Awareness Walk last week and it was a well-attended event.

(5) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT**: None.

(6) **INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC**: Howard Allman of Sylva, requested to be considered for the seat on the Southwestern Community College Board of Trustees. He believed he was very qualified to be granted the appointment. He had been a businessman in Sylva since 1981 and currently served on the SCC Foundation Board. He had served on multiple boards in the county, including being the chairman of the Library Board during the fundraising and construction phase of the Library. He had a strong connection to SCC and was a graduate of a degree program from STC. He felt he had a lot to contribute and appreciated the Board's consideration.

(7) CONSENT AGENDA:

(a) Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented the Finance Report for May, 2023 and 16 Budget Ordinance Amendments for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, for approval.

(b) Brandi Henson, Tax Collector, presented the Tax Collector and Refund Reports for May, 2023, for approval.

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

(8) TRANSIT TITLE VI PROGRAM PLAN: April Alm, Transit Director, stated Jackson County Transit was a recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds from the NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division. Jackson County Transit established a Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan for the purpose of complying with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as required by FTA Circular 4702.1B and related requirements outlined within the FTA Certifications and Assurances, “Nondiscrimination Assurance”. This document detailed the nondiscrimination program, policies and practices administered by Jackson County Transit and must be reviewed and updated every three years.

NCDOT’s Office of Civil Rights reviewed and approved Transit’s latest Title VI Plan for compliance. The Title VI Plan Coordinator had been updated and the Service Area Population tables had been updated with the latest Census data. This plan was subject to approval by the Board of Commissioners.

Motion: Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Transit Title VI Program Plan, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(9) DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER: Chad Roberson, AIA, Clarknexen, was present for this item.

Mr. Adams stated at the last presentation to the Board, they were attempting to find additional funds to create an 11-bedroom shelter versus a 9-bedroom shelter. At that time, the Board chose to move forward to match additional funding from Dogwood. Mr. Roberson had a recent bid with another project that gave more accurate numbers to estimate this project. The new estimates drastically increased the cost of the facility.

Center for Domestic Peace (CDP) and the county went back to the architect and had a new proposal. They were not asking for additional funds. The new plan was for a 9-bedroom facility, but kept the rooms at a larger size. CDP was satisfied to move forward with this design. This information had been presented to Dogwood and they were also comfortable to move forward with the 9-bedroom facility. The request would be to receive permission from the Board to move forward with this design. CDP already started grant writing for furniture, etc.

Mr. Roberson presented:

(a) Latest overall site plans, renderings to include Level 1 Floor Plan, 4,109 SF and Level 2 Floor Plan, 3,712 SF.

General discussions were held.

Mr. Adams stated a survey was being finalized of the property and when it was completed they could proceed forward with Mountain Projects transferring the property to the county. Also, NCDOT agreed to proceed forward with moving this section of the main gas line on Highway 107, so it would not impact the construction timeline.

Mr. Adams presented:

(b) Schematic Design Estimate:

Total Cost in 2023 Dollars	\$3,010,212
Escalation Construction	\$168,572
Subtotal	\$3,178,784
General Conditions	\$158,939
Project Insurances	\$50,066
Payment and Performance Bond	\$37,266
Builder's Risk	\$6,850
Sub Default Insurance	\$51,479
Contractor Fee	\$168,749
Contractor Contingency	\$69,160
Grand Total Construction Costs	\$3,721,293
Owner Contingency	\$186,065
Design Fee per Contract	\$100,000
Surveying, Geotech, Special Inspections, Permitting	\$36,108
Total Project Costs	\$4,373,466
Fence and Gate	\$250,000
Furniture, Fixture, Equipment	\$83,412
Kitchen and Laundry Equipment	\$104,265
Technology, Communications, Electronic Security	\$104,265
Total CDP Fundraising	\$458,810
Grand Total: Total Project Costs + CDP Fundraising	\$4,832,276

Mr. Adams noted they would not know the actual cost of the project until the bids were opened.

Mr. Roberson stated the goal would be for construction documents to be completed by the end of October.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to proceed forward with the design of the Domestic Violence Center, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) DOGWOOD HEALTH TRUST – OPIOID PLANNING GRANT: Mr. Adams stated the county applied for a \$368,429 grant from Dogwood Health Trust to help create a substance abuse recovery planning program for a two-year period. This program would partner with the Sheriff's MAT in the Jail to provide substance abuse treatment to incarcerated persons and enhanced treatment when they were released. They would work to build out programming for the entire county.

The grant would allow the county to hire a full-time substance abuse recovery coordinator position for a two-year period. The grant also provided funds for planning and creating an overall master plan of how to expend the Opioid Settlement dollars. This lined up directly with the Sheriff's grant. He requested approval to authorize the County Manager to sign the grant approval.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to authorize the County Manager to accept and sign the grant approval documents, as requested. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT IN JAILS GRANT PROJECT

ORDINANCE: Ms. Fox presented a Grant Project Ordinance for the Medicated-Assisted Treatment in Jails in the amount of \$493,788. The revenues for the project were from North Carolina Department of Public Safety in the amount of \$493,788.

Motion: *Commissioner Stribling moved to approve the Medication-Assisted Treatment in Jails Grant Project Ordinance, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(12) SUBSTANCE ABUSE RECOVERY PLANNING PROGRAM GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE:

Ms. Fox presented a Grant Project Ordinance for the Substance Abuse Recovery Planning Program in the amount of \$368,428.54. The revenues for the project were from Dogwood Health Trust in the amount of \$368,428.54.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the Substance Abuse Recovery Planning Program Grant Project Ordinance, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(13) EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS, NC DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND JACKSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT AND ADDENDUM:

Mr. Adams presented the Addendum to the Memorandum of Agreement between EBCI, North Carolina Division of Public Health and the county. The Addendum recognized the authority of the State of North Carolina and Jackson County and recognized EBCI was a Sovereign Nation.

The addendum stated EBCI did not authorize the State of North Carolina and/or Jackson County to inspect the infinity pool. EBCI completely indemnified the county should any losses or claims occur. Because EBCI was not allowing the county to inspect the pool, the State of North Carolina could not instruct the county to inspect the pool.

General discussions were held.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Addendum to the EBCI, NC Division of Public Health and Jackson County Agreement, as presented. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(14) JULY MEETING SCHEDULE: Mr. Adams requested to cancel the upcoming regular meeting on July 4th.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to cancel the regular meeting on July 4th, as requested. Commissioner Bryson seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(15) FY2023-24 BUDGET ORDINANCE: Mr. Adams presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget Ordinance in the amount of 88,106,428. The proposal constituted an approximate increase of 5.94% (\$4,938,651) over the current FY23 amended budget. The budget was balanced and prepared in accordance with the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, presenting appropriations by categories of expense and revenues by source. All proposals within the general fund were based upon a budget with a tax rate of \$0.38 per \$100 of value.

The Board took a five-minute recess.

Chairman Letson called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Adams noted the budget did not include the request from Mountain Projects, it would be voted on separately. Commissioner Smith served on the Mountain Projects Board, so he would request to be excused from that vote.

A public hearing was held on June 6th with public comment.

Motion: Commissioner Smith moved to adopt the FY2023-24 Budget Ordinance, along with all fee schedules, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(16) MOUNTAIN PROJECTS: Chairman Letson stated the Board would need to hold a vote to excuse Commissioner Smith from the vote to consider the Mountain Projects' request because he served on the Mountain Projects Board.

Commissioner Smith requested to be excused from this vote due to conflict because he served on the Mountain Project Board.

Motion: Commissioner Stribling moved to Excuse Commissioner Smith from voting on this item because he served on the Mountain Projects Board. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Commissioner Smith did not vote.

Mr. Adams presented a Budget Ordinance Amendment for Mountain Projects nonprofit grant in the sum of \$18,617. Funds for this grant were from the Contingency Fund in the amount of \$18,617.

Motion: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Budget Ordinance Amendment for Mountain Projects in the amount of \$18,617, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote. Commissioner Smith did not vote.

(17) TEMPORARY STIPEND POLICY: Mr. Adams stated this was a follow up from previous discussions regarding the Department of Social Services employees experiencing an unprecedented rate of providing residential foster care for children. There was a consistent issue with finding placement for children in DSS custody. When children were in the custody of DSS, it was the responsibility of the DSS Director and employees to provide care for those children until placement could be found.

This policy allowed for additional pay to the employees spending nights and weekends with these children, above and beyond comp time. He made changes as discussed at the work session, by removing the word "emergency" from the policy. He also removed the word "DSS" from the statement: "pay DSS Staff" so this could be opened up to county employees as a whole in the future. In speaking with the DSS Director, they may want to go ahead and set up an application process to create a vetted list of interested county employees.

Shift assignments for which the stipend would be paid were as follows:

Monday-Friday	5pm – 12:30am	\$75
	12:30am – 8am	\$90
Holidays, Saturday, Sunday	8am – 4pm	\$120
	4pm – Midnight	\$120
	Midnight – 8am	\$120

This proposal had been reviewed and accepted by the DSS Director. When an employee reached a maximum of 240 hours of comp time, they would switch to true time and a half and go away from the stipend. He would request approval of the policy effective June 21, 2023.

Motion: Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Temporary Stipend Policy effective June 21, 2023, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(18) AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Neil Dawson to an additional three-year term on the Agricultural Advisory Board. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Commissioner Jones requested to carry his appointment over.

(19) SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to appoint Howard Allman to serve a four-year term on the Southwestern Community College Board of Trustees. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(20) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

There being no further business, Commissioner Bryson moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman