

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
AUGUST 01, 2023**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on August 01, 2023, 6:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Mark A. Letson, Chairman	Don Adams, County Manager
Todd Bryson, Vice Chair (Via Zoom)	Patrick Scott, Interim County Attorney
Mark Jones, Commissioner	Representative (Via Zoom)
John W. Smith, Commissioner	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board
Tom Stribling, Commissioner (Via Zoom)	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

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

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Smith moved to approve the minutes of a Work Session of July 11, 2023 and a Regular Meeting of July 18, 2023, as presented. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman Letson reported he attended the Southwestern Commission's Annual Gala held in Sylva. There was a good turnout and it was a great event.

(4) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**: None.

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

(6) **INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC**:

(a) Teri Cole-Smith stated she ran an organization named RISE (Resources in Support of Empowerment) that helped folks navigate community resources, particularly for individuals and families impacted by substance use and mental health issues. A recent Sylva Herald article stated Representative Mike Clampitt reached out about locating a state funded rehab center in the county. She had questions about this proposal, but they desperately needed to discuss setting up recovery services west of Asheville.

(b) Beth Baxley stated she worked at Harris Regional Hospital for decades during a time when people would be admitted to acute care for mental health or substance abuse when they actually needed care from a mental health facility. A facility was needed in the county so families could be a support and anchor for folks. She thought it made sense financially.

(c) Kathy DiDonato stated she was a co-founder of a new organization, "Help Sylva". She had two other co-founders, Sherry and Bill Cabe. They both had children that died from an overdose. She thought they needed to stay in the county and united and fight together. On July 18th, there were 17 people that overdosed in the county, almost a person per day. This did not mean they passed away, it meant they overdosed from a substance. These people needed help and Help Sylva was there to help.

(d) Adora Fitzpatrick stated she had one of her children hospitalized in Buncombe County where he waited for two days for a bed in South Carolina. She was a homeowner in the county and she had some experience with the homeless population and mental illness. There was no help in the county and it was heartbreaking. She hoped the Commissioners would consider getting the information to have a place in the county.

(e) Melissa Orr stated she had lived experience and lived in Sylva. She had a great passion to connect people with resources. She was one of the fortunate people that had health insurance, but she had to go to other locations for care for her mental illness. Mental health was an ongoing recovery process. She had a deep passion to support others on their journey to recovery. She was the president of the NAMI Haywood Affiliate serving Jackson County. People just needed help and a place to go.

(7) **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT**: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented a Budget Ordinance Amendment for the Fire Tax Fund. This would move the remainder of the fire tax in Cashiers from Designated for Future Appropriation to Operations for the current year in the amount of \$59,670.00. Also, \$260,000.00 would be moved from the Fire Tax Fund Balance and allocated to the Fire Department for the substation.

***Motion:** Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Budget Ordinance Amendment, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(8) **REPORT TO THE CITIZENS**: Mr. Adams stated this was the fifth annual Report to the Citizens. Annually, he brought in interns pursuing a career in local government management. Hayden Hedberg was an MPA student at Western Carolina University. Mr. Hedberg visited all departments and operations in the county.

Mr. Hedberg thanked the Commissioners and Mr. Adams for the opportunity. He thanked Kerri Tucker, Executive Assistant to the County Manager for assisting and all of the department heads and welcoming staff.

He summarized areas of the report he found to be exciting:

(a) Public Works: He thought the Department of Public Works was the backbone of the county. This department consisted of five major divisions:

- Garage
- Grounds
- Housekeeping
- Maintenance
- Solid Waste

(b) Green Energy Park: He was fascinated by this unique feature of the county and how it came to be. The community had a problem with a decaying landfill, so the county stepped up and turned it into a unique asset that acquired attention from people and markets nationally. People were attracted to the community for the Green Energy Park.

(c) Animal Rescue Center: This project was completed in June, 2023 and was also a wonderful asset for the county. The Animal Rescue Center was located next to the Green Energy Park. It was very welcoming and encouraged adoption of animals. The Department of Public Health worked tirelessly to work on the unique issues of the county, including the Animal Rescue Center.

(d) Parks and Recreation Department was working to build the Aquatics Center. He provided updated photos of the current progress.

Mr. Hedberg stated he was proud to be a resident of the county. A more in depth analysis of all departments and this report was located on the county website.

***Motion:** Commissioner Smith moved to approve the fifth annual Report to the Citizens, as presented. Commissioner Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) RESOLUTION R23-07 SUPPORTING THE ABANDONMENT OF SR 1144

CHARLOW LANE: Michael Poston, Planning Director, stated the North Carolina Department of Transportation requested, based on a petition from property owners, to abandon from the state maintenance system SR 1144, locally known as Charlow Lane. Charlow Lane was located off Fenley Forest Trail in the Glenville community and was a subdivision road that provided access to The Point at Glenville subdivision.

The total length of road to be abandoned was 1162 feet, with none to be retained. G.S. 136-63 stated the Board of Commissioners, on their own motion or on a petition of a group of citizens, could request the Board of Transportation to change or abandon any road in the secondary system when the best interest of the people of the county would be served.

Chris Lee, NCDOT District Two Engineer, investigated the request and found the request to be reasonable. The applicants were the owners of the property located in The Point at Glenville subdivision. In preparation, the property owners entered into an easement agreement that secured access along Charlow Lane for the properties located in the subdivision.

Staff found the request to be in the best interest of the public as the abandonment of Charlow Lane would not affect the ingress or egress of any properties located in The Point at Glenville subdivision. Staff recommended the Board of Commissioners consider approval of Resolution R23-07 supporting the abandonment for SR 1144, Charlow Lane, from the Secondary Road System.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to approve Resolution R23-07 Supporting the Abandonment of SR 1144, Charlow Lane, as requested. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Carry over.

(11) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

(12) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

Chairman Letson called the regular meeting back to order and stated no action was taken in closed session.

There being no further business, Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman