

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
NOVEMBER 07, 2023**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on November 07, 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	Debra Bechtel, Interim County Attorney (Via Zoom)
Mark Jones, Commissioner	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
John W. Smith, Commissioner	
Tom Stribling, Commissioner (Via Zoom)	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

(1) **ORDER PROHIBITING OPEN BURNING**: Chairman Letson read an order from Michael Forbis, Fire Marshal: Open Burning Prohibited effective November 6th at 5:00 p.m. to remain in effect until formally terminated.

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

(3) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Jones moved to approve the minutes of a Work Session of October 10, 2023; a Regular Meeting of October 17, 2023; and a Reconvened Meeting of October 24, 2023, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(4) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman Letson stated he was looking forward to attending Fairview School's Thanksgiving lunch on November 16th.

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

(6) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT**: Mr. Adams reported:

(a) **Cancellation of Burning Permits and Implementation of a Burning Ban in 14 counties**: He provided a copy of the order from Fire Marshal Forbis and the state order from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The state order was for 14 counties, including Jackson. He provided updates on fires in the county and region. He urged citizens to follow the order.

(b) **Domestic Violence Shelter**: He provided a copy of the Advertisement for Bids. The bids would be due on December 11th. There would be a mandatory pre-bid meeting for general contractors on November 20th. At the December 12th work session, he would provide a preliminary summary of bids. At the December 19th regular meeting, he would make recommendations to the Board to move forward.

General discussions were held.

(7) INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC:

(a) Dick Darnall of Cashiers asked the Board to beware of the offer of federal monies for low cost housing in the county.

(b) Nelia Waldrum of Sylva encouraged the county to secure the county owned Galik property near the library. She lived across the street and was concerned about activities she had seen on the property.

(8) LICENSE PLATE AGENCY: Tabitha Ashe, Tax Administrator, stated this was a follow up from the work session. She had more details and information to provide to the Board about the county applying to be the License Plate Agency.

She presented: Sylva License Plate Agency (LPA):

(a) Introduction:

- The Sylva LPA/Tag Office played a critical role in the community, offering a variety of motor vehicle registration and titling services.
- The Sylva Office would cease operations on December 15, 2023 after being operated by the Painter family since 1971.
- The NC Division of Motor Vehicles (NC DMV) advertised to solicit application for a new operator on August 22nd.
- After receiving and reviewing applications, the contract was re-advertised on October 9th. The application deadline was November 10th.
- Currently 126 LPAs in NC.
- Since 1961, LPAs had been operated by independent contractors.
- First local government operated LPA in 1995.
- Currently, there were 23 local government operated LPAs.

(b) LPA Tiers:

- The Sylva LPA was considered a Tier II facility with 67,000-69,000 transactions per year.
- Tier II was 50,001-100,000 transactions.
- This was the average transactions for the five most recent fiscal years.
- Tier II allowed up to three personnel.
- If approved, the request would be to add three new count positions: manager, two clerks.
- A Tier II LPA must be open to the public for at least eight consecutive hours each business day.
- If approved, she requested hours of operation to be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Staff would fluctuate lunch hours to ensure operations were open.
- LPA office must observe all state holidays for which the Raleigh DMV office was closed. These were the same holidays observed by the county.

(c) NCDMV Requirements:

- General:
 - Comply with all federal, state and local laws and regulations, including the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Be cleaned regularly, presenting a professional environment.
 - Be maintained regularly, ensuring a safe environment for staff and public.
 - Be adequately heated and air conditioned.
 - Be smoke-free.
 - Provide an ADA compliant on-site restroom.
- Location:
 - Be convenient to the public.
 - Be accessible and safe and not a personal residence.
 - Be owned, leased or rented by the contractor.
 - Provide access through either a front or back entrance for delivery of inventory by a semi-trailer or other large truck.

- Have parking for customers within the immediate proximity of the office that included a minimum of one disability accessible parking space for every twenty-five parking spaces.
 - DMV must review and approve the space.
 - Have sidewalks and entryways cleared and maintained prior to the start of each business day or in the case of snow or ice accumulation, as soon as possible.
 - Keep inventory it receives from DMV in a secure place to which the public does not have access.
 - Required to display the signs provided or specified by DMV in a conspicuous place in the office at all times.
 - Have one or more security cameras in its office so the LPA had access to a recording of those who enter the office and their interactions with the employees of the LPA. All recordings must be maintained for a minimum of 30 days.
 - DMV would allocate the cost of the group insurance for theft or damage of DMV property or state monies and errors and omissions insurance to all LPAs based on their tier (\$200-\$500 annually per Transylvania County).
- (d) Proposed Location: Skyland Services Center:**
- NCDMV Requirements checked:
 - General
 - Location
 - ADA Compliant
 - 72 parking spaces, 4 handicap
 - Both DMV services in same location
 - One-stop shop for motor vehicle services
 - NCDMV Requirements not checked:
 - DMV Approved
 - Added customers would reduce parking and increase visitors during early voting and election days.
- (e) NCDMV Training:**
- Before LPA opens for business, all personnel of the LPA must receive training provided by DMV.
 - Required training for three consecutive weeks, M-F 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Rocky Mount, NC.
- (f) NCDMV Items provided:**
- Computer terminals, printers and the equipment needed to process titles and registration transactions in the State Titling and Registration System and to accept payments for these transactions. DMV must provide equipment for the number of work stations requested.
 - Supplies, such as cartridges and computer paper.
 - Two canvas lock-drop deposit bags.
- (g) Anticipated Upfront Cost to the County:**
- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| ● Construction Costs: | \$17,000 |
| ● Furniture and Equipment: | \$20,000 |
| ● Training/Travel: | \$6,000 |
| ● Office Supplies: | <u>\$2,500</u> |
| ● Total: | \$45,500 |
- (h) Anticipated Timeline:**
- November 10: Application due to DMV.
 - November 17: DMV reviews applications.
 - Late November - early December: County interviews with DMV.
 - Mid-December: DMV vetting process for applicants and locations.

- Late December - early January: DMV informs county if application was approved.
 - Mid-January: Board notified if application approved and approval requested for new positions and allocation of costs.
 - Late January: Public Works begins construction and new positions advertised.
 - Late February: Public Works completes construction.
 - Early March: New positions hired.
 - Mid-March: Three-week training completed and I.T. installs equipment.
 - Late March: Public outreach and inventory delivered.
 - Early April: LPA opens to the public.
- (i) Annual Financial Estimates:

Revenues	\$153,500
Expenses	\$170,914
Net Profit (Loss)	(17,414)

- Expenses included minimum base salaries for three positions, plus \$2,500 office supplies.
 - County would retain fee for property tax collections.
 - The salaries could increase if the applicants had experience. The County Pay Policy permitted new hires to receive direct experience in certain situations.
- (j) She presented the county's application.

General discussions were held.

Mr. Adams stated with the information provided, the request of the Board would be to give permission to Ms. Ashe to formally apply to NCDMV to operate the LPA in Sylva.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to grant permission to move forward with the process and apply to NCDMV for the county operate the LPA, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) FIREWORKS DISPLAY REQUEST: Mr. Adams stated Tony Elders, Director of Permitting and Code Enforcement, was not able to be in attendance, but had requested approval for an application he received for a fireworks display in downtown Sylva on Friday, December 1st.

He noted it would be up to Sylva Fire Chief Beck if the fireworks show would be allowed to take place with the Burning Ban in effect.

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to approve the request for fireworks display, as presented. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) COUNCIL ON AGING: Recommendations for appointments were submitted by Eddie Wells, Aging Director, on behalf of the Council on Aging.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Charlene Ward to serve an additional three-year term and to appoint Mary Kuehl to serve a three-year term on the Council on Aging. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD: *Carry over.*

(12) **RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD:** Recommendations for appointments were submitted by Rusty Ellis, Parks and Recreation Director, on behalf of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to appoint Rochelle Mau to serve a three-year term on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

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

(14) **CLOSED SESSION:**

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(3) Legal, G.S.143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property and 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 Bryson moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman