

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MAY 07, 2019**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on May 07, 2019, 6:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair
Mickey Luker, Commissioner
Ron Mau, Commissioner
Gayle Woody, Commissioner

Don Adams, County Manager
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **PROCLAMATION HONORING OLDER AMERICANS**: Commissioner Woody read a Proclamation to proclaim May as Older Americans Month. Commissioner Deitz moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

The Proclamation was presented to Eddie Wells, Department on Aging Director.

(2) **PROCLAMATION FOR PURPLE HEART COUNTY**: Commissioner Mau read a Proclamation to declare Jackson County as a Purple Heart County. Commissioner Woody moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

The Proclamation was presented to Sheila Setzer, Veterans Service Officer.

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

(4) **TAX ASSESSOR APPOINTMENT**: Chairman McMahan stated that pursuant to G.S. 105-294(a), the appointment of the County Tax Assessor was to occur before the first Commissioners' Board meeting in July, for a term of two years.

Motion: Commissioner Luker moved to appoint Tabitha Ashe as Tax Assessor for a two year term. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Chairman McMahan performed the swearing in ceremony of Tabitha Ashe.

(5) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Mau moved to approve the minutes of a Special Called Meeting of March 28, 2019; a Regular Meeting of April 04, 2019; a Work Session of April 09, 2019; and a Regular Meeting of April 16, 2019. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(6) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: None.

(7) COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

(a) Commissioner Deitz stated he had a sad meeting over the weekend. One of his best friend's son passed away last week, Riley Howell. He died at the University of North Carolina Charlotte. So many times, they looked at bad things that happened with the youth, but they had some great folks among them in the mountains. No one knew how they would react if they were in a situation like Riley was in, but they did know how he reacted. He tried to save his own life and lives around him. He thought it was a great tribute to how Riley was raised. He was proud to know his family.

(b) Commissioner Woody stated that she was impressed that past week with the generosity of the people in the community. Three events in particular came to mind. WCU had a wonderful celebration of raising millions of dollars for scholarships for WCU. At the Circles of Hope banquet there was so much money raised as well with people contributing in the community to help those get out of poverty. There was also a young woman that had some health issues and there was a fundraiser for her that raised over \$10,000 in Cullowhee. It showed the wonderful, generous people that they had in the communities.

(c) Commissioner Mau stated that week was National Travel and Tourism Week.

(8) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Adams made two announcements:

(a) They finalized the contract on the Community Services Center/Health Department/One-Stop Facility. The contract was ready, they were just waiting on insurance. They were hopeful to start seeing movement that week with substantial completion around May, 2020.

(b) James Buchanan won the Electrical Instructor of the Year Award. He was an adjunct teacher at SCC and the NC Board of Examiners for Electrical Contractors gave him the award.

(9) INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC: None.

**(10) BLUE ZONES PROJECT: Sallie Taylor, Chair, Community Volunteer, presented:
Blue Zones:**

(a) The project difference:

- Citizens: Take the personal pledge and make small changes that could have a big impact on well-being for years to come.
- Worksites: Improve the physical, emotional and social well-being where most of a person's time was spent – work.
- Schools: Teach kids healthier habits they could carry with them for a lifetime.
- Restaurants: Experience a better dining environment with healthier menu choices.
- Grocery stores: Shop where healthy foods would be easy to find.
- Community policy: Use city design, policies and social networks to create an environment to support healthy choices.

(b) A partnership that pays off:

- Measurably increase well-being
- Lower health care costs
- Improve productivity
- Position themselves as an innovator in preventative health
- Attract grants
- Improve the living environment
- Boost economic vitality

(c) Power 9 – Nine healthy lifestyle habits shared by people who have lived the longest:

- Move naturally
- Know your purpose
- Down shift
- 80% rule
- Plant slant

- Wine at 5
 - Family first
 - Belong
 - Right tribe
- (d) Blue Zones project proven:
- Well-being could be measured validly and reliably.
 - Interventions could be designed to improve well-being.
 - Small changes in well-being had big value and effect.
 - People with higher well-being cost less and perform better with lower disease prevalence.
- (e) Assessment tools:
- The Gallup Sharecare Well-Being Index was the largest data base set on well-being with over 2.5 million surveys fielded to date.
 - Well-being included five elements: purpose, social, financial, community and physical.
- (f) The Blue Zones reach:
- 47 communities
 - 10 states
 - Fort Worth, TX
 - Naples, FL
- (g) NCH Healthcare System, Naples, FL, Dr. Allen Weiss, MD, President and CEO, NCH, retired:
- Dr. Weiss was the visionary leader who brought the BZP to Naples.
 - NCH partnered with BZP to become the first Healthcare System in the nation to receive BZ Worksite Certification.
 - NCH saw a 3 point increase in employee well-being, 54% decrease in healthcare expenditures, as well as a \$27mil cost reduction in three years.
 - Nearly 60% of NHC employees pledged participation.
 - NCH moved from “repair shop for disease” to a preventative force driving healthier outcomes in the healthiest metro area in America.
- (h) Other notable outcomes:
- After the first year of the pilot project in Albert Lea, 3,400 participants (24% of the population), gained 3.2 years to their average life expectancy due to changes in their life habits. Participants also self-reported a collective weight loss of 7,280 pounds. The city of Albert Lea independently reported a 40% drop in health care costs for city workers.
 - After three years, in the Los Angeles Beach Cities (Hermosa, Redondo and Manhattan Beach), the measurement of 80 different facets of well-being (physical and psychological) by Gallup–Healthways showed a 14% drop in obesity (compared to a 3% drop in obesity across California), a 30% drop in smoking and better self-reported eating habits and increased physical activity.
 - As a statewide initiative by BC/BS of Iowa, 10 cities that were most ready for change, have shown impressive drops in obesity rates and decreased health care costs. The BC/BS actuaries were calculating a health-care savings over a 10-year period of \$5 billion due to the establishment of Blue Zones.
 - In four years, Fort Worth saw a 4 point increase in well-being as the nation dropped .5 points, smoking dropped by 6.1% saving \$268M, school grants of \$3.2M were awarded for Safe Routes and 9.9M was secured for built environment of various types.
- (i) The Blue Zones Initiative was a community transformation for all citizens of Jackson and Macon Counties.
- (j) There was a need:
- 86% of nearly \$3T annual US Healthcare costs were spent on chronic diseases.
 - Diabetes was on the rise by .7%, costing \$327B in direct cost and reduced productivity.
 - Obesity rose in 34 states to 28.3% of national population with costs of \$147B.

- 5.8M Americans have Alzheimer’s, rising to 14M by 2050.
 - In 2019 Alzheimer’s and other dementias would cost \$290M.
 - They already knew that exercise, stress reduction and diet play a huge role in disease reduction. Studies were indicating this was true for Alzheimer’s as well.
- (k) The Steering Committee:**
- Sallie Taylor, Chair, Community Volunteer
 - Bee Gleeson, Owner of White Oak Realty
 - Michele Garashi-Ellick, ED of Great Smokies Health Foundation
 - Kate Martinson, NP, US Navy, Vision Cashiers
 - Carol Means, RN, Strength Trainer and Yoga Instructor
 - Robin Tindal, ED of Highlands-Cashiers Health Foundation
 - Gerri Tulley, ARNP, Community Volunteer
- (l) Contacted community sectors:**
- Mayors and town boards of Franklin, Highlands, Sylva, *Dillsboro, *Webster, Vision Cashiers, WCU, *Jackson County Board of Commissioner and Macon County Board of Commissioners.
 - Senator Jim Davis, Representative Kevin Corbin, Representative Joe Sam Queen, Sara Thompson of Southwestern Commission and Paul Meyer of NC League of Municipalities.
 - Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation, Great Smokies Health Foundation and Angel Health Foundation, Highlands Community Fund, *Cashiers Community Fund, *Dogwood Health Trust and AHEC
 - *Superintendents of Jackson and Macon Counties, Rotary Club of Highlands, *Mountain Top Rotary, Directors of Chambers of Highlands, Cashiers, Jackson County and Franklin.
 - Major employers of the region, including OEI and Drake Software.
 - Other targets of the committee: realtors, restaurants, hospitals, parks and recreation, grocery stores, faith based organizations, food pantries, media and others
- (m) Community development process:**
- Successful BZP communities have three key characteristics: Champions who lead, a broad base of stakeholders/support and clear funding sources.
 - Phase 1- Community Leadership Presentation, Monday, June 10, 2019. A one-time fee of \$5,000 + travel expenses was funded by anonymous donors. This event would gauge support for the next step through survey results.
 - Phase 2- Mutual Agreement to start the Community Development Process that included a funding strategy with respective community leaders/organizations who would participate in the two day Site Visit
 - Phase 3- Site Visit to determine the communities’ readiness and the opportunity for impact by meeting with a larger group of leaders and stakeholders. There was a one-time fee of \$50,000.
 - Phase 4- Report and Proposal/Readiness Recommendations Delivery.
 - Phase 5- Final Decision Meeting for the community to communicate its decision to pursue BZP.
 - Phase 6- Contracting for a scope of services and mutual obligations.
 - Phase 7- Announcement Event for the initiation of the community BZP.

Mr. Adams stated that Ms. Taylor had visited with him previously and the county already invested in several activities that coincided with the Blue Zone. He thought what was being presented was not contrary to what they had discussed about connecting the communities with sidewalks, greenways, gardens and healthy eating. There were several items that fell within the goals and objectives of the Blue Zone. He thought it would benefit the community as a whole when they started getting additional private investment and other investment into these activities also.

Commissioner Woody stated that with the health update for the county and the Wellness Program for the county employees, she thought there was a real connection with the Wellness Program and those nine points.

Informational item.

(11) JACKSON COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION: Ken Torok, President; Patrick McGuire, Board Member; and Susan Belcher, Board Member, were present for this item.

Mr. Torok presented:

(a) Jackson County Community Foundation:

- The Jackson County Community Foundation (JCCF) was one of 54 affiliates of the North Carolina Community Foundation.
- JCCF raised money locally and grants it out to local nonprofits every year. All of their resources were kept local to meet the county needs.
- They had over \$800,000 in charitable assets for the county. All the money was invested in permanent endowments and a percentage was available to give out each year. That allowed donors and organizations to make lasting contributions to the community.
- They had given out \$135,000 in grant since 1992 through the unrestricted fund.
- JCCF had a Family of Funds that included endowments for local nonprofits, individuals or families. Anyone could establish a legacy of charitable giving through JCCF.
- They served to connect and convene community members around community issues and needs. They served as catalysts to improve the community, making it a better place to live and work for all.

Dr. McGuire presented:

(b) What was happening in the area:

- In the county, 47% of those surveyed stated that their life had been negatively affected by substance abuse, either their own or someone else. This was the same as the WNC region average, but higher than the state of 37%. Additionally, 17.5% of Jackson County residents stated that they had used opioids/opiates in the last year with or without a prescription (WNC Healthy Impact Community Health Survey, 2018). This meant a fairly substantial portion of the population was using prescription medications. Whether or not they were using them with a doctor's prescription, this still put them at risk of misuse or potential overdose.
- At last report (2017), EMS personnel administered Naloxone 18 times for overdoses. Naloxone was controversial, but it was important to know that Naloxone could also save lives of the elderly or cancer patients that were prescribed high powered pain medication.

Mr. Torok presented:

(c) Campaign:

- The JCCF would conduct an Opioid Awareness Campaign during September, 2019.
- Large banner display in Sylva, Cherokee and Cashiers.
- Kickoff advertising in all of the county papers, billboards and radio.
- Host a public forum with notable speaker(s).
- Speak at all public schools during assemblies with appropriate brochures for different age groups. Have 5,000 brochures pertinent to four target populations: middle school, high school, WCU and SCC and all medical professionals.
- Letters to all doctors, dentists and health care professionals enlightening them of Rx dangers.
- Provide an informative program to all civic groups in Sylva, Cherokee, Cashiers and Cullowhee.
- Host several morning radio shows.

Ms. Belcher presented:

(d) Partners:

- The Sheriff's Department had stated that an averaged about five 55 gallon barrels of "turned in pills" every 12-18 months. In addition, at three "take back" events sponsored by the Health Department as part of the Safe Community Program, 22 pounds were turned in. Likely, 75% of calls to the department were somehow related to drugs. Either with direct cause of the call or indirectly through property crimes or violence.
- Dr. Carol Burton, Acting Provost at Western Carolina University had stated that they fully endorsed the JCCF's initiative around the opioid crisis. As a partner with the local region, they shared important community issues and currently the health and prosperity of many of the citizens were being compromised because of the epidemic. They wished JCCF a successful campaign in educating about and combating the effects of opioid addiction.
- Dr. Don Tomas, President at Southwestern Community College had stated that they applauded the efforts of the JCCF in their efforts to expand awareness of the opioid crisis in the county. SCC's Human Services Technology Department trained students to work as professionals in substance abuse treatment. The goals of JCCF of raising opioid abuse awareness in the county matched with their instructional goals. They thanked JCCF for their efforts on behalf of the citizens and environment and they stood ready to help in any way.
- Dr. Kim Elliott, Superintendent of Jackson County Public Schools had stated that the opioid awareness campaign and the partnership with the JCCF was an integral part of the Drug Abuse Cessation and Educational Programming in the Jackson County Public Schools. Drug abuse touched the students' lives in very direct and indirect ways. They supported and advocated for additional programming and resources to assist with the epidemic.

Mr. Torok presented:

(e) Goals:

- At the end of September, 2019, the goal was that every resident of the county would have a new awareness of how real the opioid epidemic was in the county. They wanted every student to know what the outcome of drug use would be. They wanted medical professionals to know how important their role could be in solving the problem.
- They wanted every resident and student to know what to do in case of a drug emergency and where to go for help.
- They wanted every student to know how to seek counseling.
- They requested that the Board of Commissioners issue a proclamation declaring September as Opioid Awareness Month in the county.

Chairman McMahan stated that the county held an Opioid Forum over a year ago to educate the Board and elected officials and it was a great eye opener. He appreciated the work they were doing to raise awareness in the community and especially with the students and young people. It was an epidemic and they desperately needed to continue to strive to make the public aware of the problem and what they could do to help solve it. He thought they would wholeheartedly support them and find ways to partner with them.

Commissioner Deitz stated they had chosen something hard to do, but it was really needed. They would support them all they could. What they were doing was really important and he thanked them.

Commissioner Woody suggested they contact Judge Letts, who was very concerned about this issue. He was a great resource for speaking about it and he may also want to serve on the advisory board.

Commissioner Mau suggested that they may want to reach out to Senator Davis as well as he had done some things on a state level.

Informational item.

(12) GREEN ENERGY PARK MASTER PLAN: Gary Warner, Landscape Architect and Planner with Withers Ravenel, stated he would be presenting the final master plan for the Green Energy Park. There were a couple of small changes to the master plan from the last update that would have some significant changes to the budget. The first change was the square footage of the Innovation Center. Initially, it was 17,000 SF and had been adjusted to 13,000 SF. Also, the Recycle Center had been moved off-site.

He presented:

Green Energy Park Final Master Plan:

(a) Proposed Park Program:

- Animal Rescue Center
- Innovation Center (approximately 13,000 SF)
- Event Space
- Walking Trails
- Dog Run / Park
- Open Space
- Parking
- Relocate Recycling Center off-site

(b) Phases:

- Phase 1: Relocate kilns, demo and site work for Animal Shelter \$79,656
- Phase 2: Remove SRC, site work for Event and Space Innovation Center \$473,415
- Phase 3: Animal Shelter, Event Plaza, Drives, Demo Greenhouses \$4,336,524
- Phase 4: Walking Trails, Dog Run, Plantings and Gardens \$157,320
- Phase 5: Innovation Center, Entry Drives and Parking \$2,514,627
- Total \$7,561,542

Mr. Warner stated that they believed this would be a great event space and would be a really nice campus and park that would cater to a lot of different users.

Mr. Adams stated that the \$2.5mil for the Innovation Center started to become a more reasonable amount to start discussing grants. They would see what they could do to preserve the metal structure of the current event space and would continue to explore ideas on how to save money. The next step would be the architect.

Commissioner Woody stated that she spoke with the head of the Art Department at WCU regarding rebuilding the kilns since they were instrumental in the existing kilns. They were interested in the students being involved.

Mr. Adams stated that on the plan, there was a placeholder for the kiln in terms of space. When they started evaluating the Animal Rescue Center, they would also evaluate the placeholder space. They did have some kilns packed up as well, so they would need to evaluate the site about how they would implement the existing kiln and the ones they had packed up for years.

Commissioner Deitz inquired about parking near the Art Walk on the landfill. He thought a lot of people would be using this and maybe there needed to be parking just for that.

Mr. Adams stated that since it was the landfill, they could not put anything on it. Any parking would have to be along the edge, which was on the edge of the closed landfill itself. Once a vehicle was introduced into the area, it would become a different area. They could continue to explore that, but it would be a very tight area and they were concerned about the ability to get in and out with two cars. Also, there was a steep embankment. He was not saying it was impossible, but the reason they moved away from it was because that was where they were limited. Ultimately, they would have to deal with how to handle traffic with pedestrian traffic. They could explore it further.

Mr. Warner stated that there were methane gas collection pipes and drainage up there as well. In order to do parking up there, they were looking at a 42 foot wide asphalt parking area.

Mr. Adams stated that the concept of the whole park would be to have parking and ADA parking near the event center. They did have an event lawn area, which was a grassy open area. They could bring some of the dog park to that area, but they would have to make the event space smaller. He did not recommend vehicle traffic on the upper portion near the closed landfill area. It would be very difficult. Also, they would want to make sure they did not destroy or disturb the cap on the closed landfill.

Commissioner Woody stated that if at some point they saw the usage really increased and they needed more parking, they could take some of the event space, if they needed to.

Informational item.

(13) RFQ FOR ANIMAL RESCUE CENTER AND OTHER FUNCTIONS / SELECTED ARCHITECT FIRM: Mr. Adams stated that he wanted to discuss with the Board the process they had went through to select an architectural firm for the next phase, which would be to design out the actual facilities. The county advertised and received four proposals. He presented the proposal from McMillan, Pazdan and Smith Architecture, which was determined to be the most qualified firm that submitted a proposal. This was not a bid process, this was to evaluate the architect firm. The next phase would be to negotiate a contract to develop the schematic phase of the project.

He highlighted some items from the proposal:

(a) McMillan, Pazdan and Smith Architecture's animal shelter clients frequently hired them for subsequent phases of work because they surpassed their goals. From reducing Length of Stay by 75% in two years to doubling their net income, they helped shelters consistently achieve great outcomes through their designs.

(b) Project team:

- Ron Smith, AIA, Principal in Charge
- Cary Perkins, AIA, Project Manager/Project Architect
- Kirk Martin, Community Studio Quality Control Director

(c) Relevant Design Experience: This architectural firm had more recent and direct experience than at least two of the other applicants out of the four. He provided details on several facilities this firm had designed. He also noted that they won awards for their designs of several facilities.

Mr. Adams stated that it was determined that McMillan, Pazdan and Smith Architecture was the most qualified firm to work with them and proceed forward with the project. His goal was to potentially have proposals in front of them at the May 14th work session.

Also, he noted that the previous study done on the animal shelter that the Board funded a few years ago, had been digitized and shared with Ms. Perkins. She was taking that into consideration when developing the next steps. There was a lot of information in the study that was still useful and they would put it into the present design.

Commissioner Mau noted that the population numbers used in that report were not the same as they used in the Comprehensive Plan. They may want to figure out which ones they wanted to use.

Informational item.

(14) OFFER TO PURCHASE FROM NORTH TO SOUTH VENTURES, LLC: Ms. Baker stated that this offer was one they had seen before. A few meetings ago North to South Ventures, LLC presented offers on two lots. One of the lots went through and had already closed. The other, Lot 33, had an upset bid on it. North to South Ventures, LLC then upset that bid, which was what was before them for consideration. The new purchase price was \$6,582.35, which was \$657.35 more than the original offer.

Motion: *Commissioner Mau moved to accept the offer from North to South Ventures, LLC, as presented. Commissioner Luker seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(15) **RESOLUTION R19-16 APPOINTING REVIEW OFFICERS:** Ms. Baker presented Resolution R19-16 and stated that state law required the Board of Commissioners to appoint review officers in the Tax Assessor’s Office. With Ms. Ashe coming on board as the Tax Administrator, they needed to add her to the list, which was the only change made from the previous resolution.

Motion: *Commissioner Luker moved to adopt the Resolution R19-16 Appointing Review Officers, as presented. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(16) **COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR LONG TERM CARE:**

Motion: *Commissioner Luker moved to appoint Patsy Deitz to serve an initial one year term on the Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care, term expiring May 04, 2020 Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

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

There being no further business, Commissioner Mau moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Woody seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman