

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MAY 22, 2019**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Work Session on May 22, 2019, 8:30 a.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) PUBLIC SCHOOLS: Dr. Kim Elliott, Superintendent; Alison Laird-Large, Chair; Elizabeth Cooper, Vice Chair; Kristie Walker, CFO; and Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent, were present for this item.

Dr. Elliott presented: Budget Request 2019-20:

(a) Historic Jackson County Appropriations for Operations:

Year	Total Funding
2019	\$7,670,646
2018	\$7,478,979
2017	\$6,915,072
2016	\$6,779,482
2015	\$6,779,482
2014	\$6,779,482

(b) Appreciation for the following new allocations in 2018-19 in the area of operations:

- Six student support specialists
 - First specialist saw 1,004 students
 - Second specialist saw 445 students
 - Third specialist saw 697 students
 - Fourth specialist saw 480 students
 - Fifth specialist saw 141 students
 - Sixth specialist saw 78 crisis intervention students
- Three classroom teachers
- 2% increase in operations

(c) 2019-20 Student Achievement Goal: The JCPS Superintendent was committed to empowering Principals and School Improvement Teams to increase student achievement. Fund balance of \$200,000 had been committed to the schools and would be allocated according to a poverty/small school banded formula for use in purchasing approved programming, tutors and extending current employees contracts to directly impact individual student performance.

(d) 2019-20 Request:

- Increase 2018-19 budget by 2% overall
- \$87,680 for curriculum coordinator plus additional employment for teachers, staff and tutors
- Capital request as presented April, 2019

(e) One-Time Bonus for Future Consideration:

- Jackson County teachers currently received a 2% local supplement, which would continue
- In addition, they wanted to provide both teachers and all other staff \$250.
- Total cost \$189,141

(f) Class Size Legislation:

- Enrollment was stable to declining, therefore they were able to maintain compliance with the three teachers from last year.
- 2021-22 school year:

	Individual Maximum	District Average
Kindergarten	21	18
1st Grade	19	16
2nd Grade	20	17
3rd Grade	20	17

Dr. Elliott stated that a better education for Jackson County students was only possible through a partnership between the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education. She thanked the Board for the continued support of the students.

Commissioner Woody inquired about the money for a curriculum coordinator. Her gut belief was that teachers-student interaction was the most important thing to student success. She believed they needed teachers. She was not against the request, but she had a hard time. What would convince her that the curriculum coordinator would really help day to day life of students? They had excellent teachers that were highly trained, why did they need a curriculum coordinator?

Dr. Elliott stated that she was also a teacher at heart and she would tell her that the class size was good. Therefore, she did not need to ask for that additional teacher. One teacher made a huge difference for 29 students. She was looking for a bigger impact. She was looking for this person to be in the field with the teachers impacting 3,600 students. This person was not going to be stationed at the central office full time, they would have a desk there. They would be out in the schools looking at the standards. When the Common Core came in, she did not believe they had supported the teachers with the curriculum in the manner they should have. This person would spend a lot of time in the classroom, helping teachers and helping students.

Commissioner Woody asked what would be the difference in this position and the lead teachers they already had in schools, wasn't that their responsibility to make sure the curriculum was being followed?

Dr. Elliott stated that not always. Some lead teachers worked as coaches of teachers and some worked as an interventionist for students. She was trying to bring stability and consistency so that this person worked directly with teachers.

Commissioner Mau stated that he was still unclear as to what this person would be doing.

Dr. Elliott stated it was the leader of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for the district where teachers come together and share best practice. They had a great model and needed to be consistent across the district with the PLC. The PLC looked at the data and reached a solution about an individual group of students. This person would be leading those district level PLC school by school and for the whole district. Neighboring counties had one per school and they had none.

Commissioner Deitz stated that Swain County did not have this person.

Dr. Elliott stated that if they looked at Haywood and Henderson Counties, their test scores were higher than Jackson and they had a coordinator in each school.

Commissioner Luker asked if she was saying that this would be an individual that would bring consistency across the district and best practices.

Dr. Elliott stated absolutely. She felt their teachers were excellent, but they did not have the elbow to elbow support that she knew they had in two other counties that had higher test scores than Jackson.

Commissioner Luker stated that since he had been a Commissioner, they had requested for assistance to get the schools where they needed to be and fought to increase the score levels and ways to do that. He personally did not like the tests, but they were stuck with it and they had to do something to bring the scores up and if that was a method and a means that they saw and believed in.

Dr. Elliott stated that she knew it worked in two other places and she knew that the Jackson County teachers were just as good or better than the two other places. She felt it was her duty to support their teachers in the way that two other counties had supported theirs. She was only asking for one. If it worked, she may need to dip into fund balance and ask for a second. She wanted to see the data and be sure it worked before she came in with a major plan that could be a five year plan for operation. She needed to see the student achievement arise just as they did.

Commissioner Deitz asked if the lead teachers taught a full load?

Dr. Elliott stated that no, lead teachers typically intervened with small groups of students. They taught reading and math six students at a time.

Commissioner Deitz stated he knew they did a great job, but they could always improve. He knew the curriculum directors did a lot of work, including staff development and state meetings. Would both be going to the meetings?

Dr. Elliott stated that no, the coordinator would be staying in the schools. It would take a year before they would know the test scores. They needed the third person and they had that third person in the past. She cut the position several years ago to balance the budget, which left two people doing three people's work.

Informational item.

(2) BUDGET MESSAGE: Mr. Adams noted that in the Budget Message, on Page 2 "Reclassify Sheriff Deputy BLET Certification from 45 to 46", should be "46 to 47".

Darlene Fox, Finance Director, stated that for the Sheriff Deputies to move one grade it would \$44,111. For the Detention Officers it would be \$24,702. The total to make the changes, with benefits would be \$82,575.

Informational item.

(3) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY: Nick Breedlove, Executive Director, stated that the TDA was requesting a full time position of Sales and Marketing Manager. The primary purpose of the position was management of sales strategies and social media marketing platforms to increase lodging occupancies and visitors to the county.

- Essential job functions: Sales and group marketing 40%
- Social and digital marketing platforms 40%
- Administrative duties 10%
- Community relations 5%
- Recommended salary of \$35,656.23 Grade 22, Step 1
- Benefits included the total cost to the TDA budget \$55,079.05

Mr. Adams stated that as the TDA progressed forward with requesting increases in administrative costs, with the legislation, there was a certain percentage of the occupancy monies that could be used for administration. At some point, he would request that become some type of report to the Board as that was the role of this Board as the authorizing board. It was their responsibility to make sure they followed state statute.

Informational item.

(4) NON-PROFITS: Mr. Adams stated that some of the non-profits would appear before the Board the next day. He provided a summary sheet for the specific recommendations. Some of the non-profits would be appear before the Board to request additional funds that were not included and some would only provide a report. Traditionally, decisions were not made at the budget meetings.

Informational item.

(5) SHERIFF'S OFFICE: Sheriff Chip Hall; Chief Deputy Kim Hooper; and Shena Phillips, Executive Assistant to the Sheriff, were present for this item.

Sheriff Hall stated that the primary function and goal of the budget that year was to have good employees, recruit good employees and retain good employees. They were focused on a lot of incentives for their employees. They hoped to obtain some that year and work toward goals in the future not only for the Sheriff's Office employees, but the county as a whole.

He made the following requests:

- Reclassify Sheriff Deputy with BLET Certification and FTO Completion from a SH46 to SH47.
- Reclassify Detention Officer from SH45 to SH46.
- Educational Incentives
- Holiday Pay
- A new part-time line item. These part-time funds would be used exclusively to hire certified law enforcement officers on a part-time basis. The proposed amount would allow for 120 hours of part-time assistance a month. The proposed hourly pay rate would be based upon the salary established for a deputy with certifications. It was also requested that the new career path hiring policy be applied to these part-time officers.
- Equipment: laptop computer, car video and taser replacements and spotting scope.
- Vehicles: \$246,000 to replace vehicles at the Sheriff's Office, \$36,500 for a jail transport vehicle.
- Improvements: Security fencing and replacement of plumbing chase for jail and evidence pass through lockers.

Informational item.

(6) LIBRARY: Tracy Fitzmaurice, Librarian, stated thanked the Board for their continued funding of the Jackson County Public Library and the Albert Carlton Community Library. Thanks to their support, they were able to move the part-time Youth Services position in the Cashiers Library to a full-time position in the new fiscal year and also to give their staff a 2.8% cost of living adjustment. After further review and with some adjustments to the original request, they were able to balance their budget with the increase proposed in the 2019-20 county budget.

Highlights of the past year and some upcoming developments in the libraries:

- The StudentAccess initiative expanded to include Summit Charter and the Academy at SOAR. During the upcoming year, they planned on working with private schools to further extend the initiative.

- The Cashiers Library was used significantly by Summit Charter, Blue Ridge School, Blue Ridge Early College and the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau. A full-time staff member in the Youth Services position would increase the support for Cashiers area students for research papers, coding education and a variety of STEM supporting activities.
- Both libraries were gearing up for the Summer Learning Program, “A Universe of Stories”.
- The Library would be participating in the Summer Nutrition Program with the Lego Lunches two days a week. These lunches would be incorporated into the regular summer learning programming to provide free, nutritious meals when school was not in session.
- They received a Library Services and Technology grant from the State Library. The grant was used for the purchase of a variety of Maker Tools for public use.
- Demand for technology assistance continued to grow. Between July 1, 2018 and April 30, 2019, staff answered 20, 628 technology questions from the general public.
- They continued to partner with Legal Aid to offer 6-10 free legal aid sessions each month.
- Starting July, 2019, they would be offering access to Universal Class, a database offering over 500 online continuing education courses.

Informational item.

(7) SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE: Dr. Don Tomas, President and William Brothers, CFO, were present for this item.

Mr. Brothers presented:

(a) Assumptions affecting 2019-2020 budget:

- Current discussions regarding legislative salary increases call for a 1.5% or \$500 across the board increase.
- Employer contribution for teachers and state employees’ retirement increased from 18.86% to 20.43%.
- Contribution rate for medical insurance increased from 6,104 to 6,349.
- The College was ever-mindful for funds for capital and have requested \$431,213.79 for these needs. This was down approximately 61% versus 2018-2019.

(b) Building Information: All buildings total replacement cost \$44,202,954

(c) Operating Expenses – Operating Budget Requests:

- 2016-17 \$1,940,028.00 actual
- 2017-18 \$2,002,725.17 actual
- 2018-19 \$2,034,680.93 actual
- 2019-20 \$2,050,989.00 projected
- Growth 2016-17 to 2019-20 (projected) was 5.72%. Average growth was 1.43% per year.

(d) Operating Expense Detail:

Expense Category	Expense Detail 2018-19	Expense Detail 2019-20
Management Operations, Salary and Benefits	\$1,021,312.73	\$1,045,313.27
Utilities and Supplies	\$555,381.05	\$568,432.34
Insurance	\$88,728.89	\$90,813.99
Software, Maintenance and General Expenses	\$338,475.33	\$346,429.40
	\$2,003,898.00	\$2,050,989.00

(e) Capital Requests – Capital Budget Requests:

- 2016-17 \$1,405,670.00
- 2017-18 \$935,800.00
- 2018-19 \$704,125.00
- 2019-20 \$431,213.00

(f) Capital Request Detail:

Capital Items	Priority	
Replace HVAC AHUs and Condensers at Founders Hall	1	\$150,000.00
Burrell Bridge Abutment	2	\$84,715.00
Fleet Vehicles	3	\$42,999.00
Fork Lift	4	\$15,000.00
Holt Library Carpet	5	\$2,000.00
Bradford Window Replacement	6	\$24,480.00
Create doorway between Oaks 109A and 116	7	\$10,500.00
Re-roof Gazebos	8	\$10,500.00
Incidental Capital Expenses	9	\$41,019.79
		\$431,213.79

(g) Fleet Vehicle total for service expenses: \$26,313.00

(h) Pertinent Statutes: Expenditure of Funds general provisions:

- Trips of 100 miles or less: 1. Use of college owned vehicle; 2. Use of personal vehicle; 3. Use of rental car
- Trips of 100 miles or more: 1. Use of rental car; 2. Use of college owned vehicle; 3. Use of personal vehicle

(i) Summary of Total Requests: Total budget requests:

- 2016-17 \$3,345,698.00
- 2017-18 \$2,746,872.00
- 2018-19 \$2,708,023.00
- 2019-20 \$2,482,203.40

(j) Firing Range Update: Estimated cost of \$287,000:

- Backstop improvements
- Raise berm with wall/Conex
- Borrow source stabilized with grass
- Leyland Cypress trees
- Add two firing lanes to increase throughput/reduce range time
- Electric target system

Informational item.

There being no further business, Commissioner Mau moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 10:41 a.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman