

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MAY 07, 2024**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on May 07, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present:	Mark A. Letson, Chairman	Kevin King, County Manager
	Todd Bryson, Vice Chair	John Kubis, Interim County Attorney (Via Zoom)
	Mark Jones, Commissioner	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
	John W. Smith, Commissioner	
	Tom Stribling, Commissioner	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

(1) PROCLAMATION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WEEK AND PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL DAY: Chairman Letson read a Proclamation to proclaim May 15th-21st as Law Enforcement Officers Week and May 15th as Peace Officers Memorial Day. Commissioner Smith moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Sheriff Doug Farmer, Captain Tony Cope and Corporal C.B. Hooper, were present to accept the proclamation.

(2) PROCLAMATION FOR PURPLE HEART COUNTY: Chairman Letson read a Proclamation to proclaim Jackson County as a Purple Heart County. Commissioner Stribling moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

Sheila Crumpler, Veterans Service Officer, was present to accept the proclamation.

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

(4) MINUTES: Commissioner Bryson moved to approve the minutes of a Work Session of April 09, 2024 and a Regular Meeting of April 16, 2024, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(5) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairman Letson reported there was a lot happening in the county for spring and it was nice to see Highway 107 starting to be paved. He attended Greening Up the Mountains a few weekends ago and it was a wonderful event.

(6) COMMISSIONER REPORTS: Commissioner Jones stated he also attended the Greening Up the Mountains event. He gave accolades to the Town of Sylva and all businesses involved. It was a well-attended event and it was a wonderful way to spend the day.

(7) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. King reported on county construction projects:

(a) Recreation Center Aquatics Complex: The project was 85% complete and was on task to be completed by July, 2024.

(b) Center for Domestic Peace: A pre-construction meeting was held on April 26th. Notice to proceed was issued on April 29th for phase 1 and the second notice to proceed would be issued on July 13th. Construction meetings would be held on a monthly basis starting July 17th.

(c) Cashiers Splash Pad: The project was projected to begin bidding in June. Utility work was being finalized and they were awaiting the return of stormwater permits.

(d) Webster Park: Work was scheduled to commence mid-May and the project was in motion. Materials had been ordered and they were awaiting confirmation of a shipment date.

(e) Whittier-Qualla Park: Bidding was expected to commence in June. Finalization of ongoing utility line work was underway to ensure all necessary permits were in place. Additional time had been needed to relocate sewer and water lines.

(f) Animal Shelter Dillsboro Complex: H&M Constructors continued to work on warranty issues, mostly with HVAC. Shade had been ordered for the outside.

(g) Department on Aging: A bid was received in the amount of \$557,000 for replacement beams. They were working to look at alternatives due to increased prices and were engaging a structural engineer.

(h) Canada Fire Department and Community Center: A letter had been received from the fire department requesting full utilization of the building, setting the community room for the public. Odell Thompson, Architect, had been engaged for a scope of work for a bidding process.

(i) Mark Watson Park: Soil borings were being conducted to determine the best method and material for the parking area. They were looking at the feasibility of making the parking area concrete rather than asphalt and utilizing public works for project labor.

(j) Justice Center: Mr. Thompson had been engaged to update the plan and develop alternatives for future growth.

(k) Drexel Plant: A plan was being created for work flow to develop project feasibility and direction.

(l) Fiber Connectivity: The project would connect all county buildings together with fiber optics to decrease costs and increase efficiency.

(m) Dillsboro River Park: The Parks and Recreation Department and Economic Development would look at possible uses for the vacant property.

(n) Greenway: Over the last year, several properties had been purchased to extend the Greenway. Property acquisition and fund development would continue to extend the Greenway footprint.

(8) INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC:

(a) Stephen Anfinson stated he was a current member of the Department of Social Services Board. He stated his support for the Department of Social Service Director's budget request for FY2024-25 and requested the Board's full support of the department's request.

(b) Kelly Freeman requested consideration for a stronger noise ordinance in the county to allow for enforcement by the Sheriff's Office. He had issues with neighboring student housing in Cullowhee.

(c) Eddie Parris requested the Board consider an ordinance that would allow the Sheriff's Office to enforce noise levels, drug use and weapons being fired during all hours in the Speedwell community near WCU student housing.

(9) FONTANA REGIONAL LIBRARY AGREEMENT: Mr. Kubis stated the Commissioners had received the proposed revised version of the Fontana Regional Library Agreement. Originally, the agreement was entered into and between Jackson County, Macon County, Swain County and Fontana Regional Library. The purpose of the agreement was to promote and perpetuate excellent library services to the residents of the areas included within the jurisdictions of the counties.

They were working to accomplish a collective agreement between the counties and the Fontana Regional Library entity, to make sure the document in place, which was up for periodic review, was getting to the heart of what the participating counties wanted to accomplish through the agreement and how best to do that.

Recently, he met with the Swain County Attorney and they came to a consensus on how best to restructure or streamline the agreement to make sure they were getting everyone's consideration into the process. Also, to make sure the agreement continued to be a living document everyone was happy with and it was carrying out its intended purpose.

This was one step in a continuing process and communication with the other counties and Fontana Regional Library to make sure everyone would get an opportunity to have a say on how this would be finalized. They were hopeful to reach a conclusion on the document and get the situation to a period of closure to move forward with the useful operation of the Fontana Regional Libraries and make sure they do the best for the counties.

Part of the process included feedback of all the parties to the agreement. Recently, they received feedback and input from Fontana Regional Library. Specifically, input about how changes made may or may not comply with North Carolina Administrative Code. He thought this was something the county and Board should take into consideration. They wanted to make sure the document was an enforceable, legal document in compliance with state, federal regulations. The next step of the process would be to take this under consideration speaking with Fontana Regional Library, Macon County and Swain County.

Commissioner Smith stated he saw it as an issue having the County Attorneys discussing the matter without the input of the Commissioners. He thought all of the counties needed to have Commissioner representatives to hash out what the counties wanted, so they did not have to keep passing it around.

Commissioner Bryson stated he agreed with Commissioner Smith. They had kicked this along for months. He thought a regional meeting with the full Boards of Commissioners would be in order to get to the bottom of the issue.

Chairman Letson asked Mr. Kubis if it would be reasonable to have two Commissioners from each Board to meet at the end of May? This way, the Commissioners would at least have a voice in the room.

Mr. Kubis stated he thought that was a great idea. As previously indicated, he welcomed input from the Commissioners and other Boards to help streamline the process.

Commissioner Smith requested Mr. King to spearhead putting together a meeting.

Commissioner Jones stated he believed the attorneys in the room should have governmental experience. On the changes made to the agreement, he agreed with the public comment portion, but he questioned the language of the chair answering questions from the public. He believed that needed to be taken out. Also, under the Powers and Duties section, most of the paragraph was written according to NCGS 160A-102, which referred to cities and towns not libraries. There were 12 regional libraries systems in North Carolina, but none included this language.

Also, regarding the Fontana Regional Library Director's job description being placed on the website, currently all job descriptions were listed on the website. He did not like the added language "for transparency". It sent a signal there was a lack of transparency. He did not believe those two words should be included because all of the Library's audits, minutes and job descriptions were already listed online.

General discussions were held.

Mr. King stated he would work to put together a meeting with two Commissioners from each county, each County Attorney, each County Manager and Fontana Regional Library.

Commissioner Bryson thanked Mr. Kubis for all his work. They did need to wrap this up in the near future.

Informational item.

(10) ABC BOARD: A recommendation was submitted by the ABC Board to reappoint Thomas Albert to an additional term and to reappoint David Noland as Chair. The Town of Sylva voted to reappoint David Noland as Chair.

Motion: *Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint Thomas Albert to serve an additional three-year term on the ABC Board. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Motion: *Commissioner Stribling moved to reappoint David Noland to serve an additional one-year term as Chair on the ABC Board. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Motion: *Commissioner Stribling moved to reappoint John Bubacz to serve an additional three-year term on the Business and Industry Advisory Committee. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Motion: *Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Nicole Owen to serve an additional three-year term on the Business and Industry Advisory Committee. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(12) RECREATION AND PARKS ADVISORY BOARD: A recommendation was submitted by Michael Hopkins, Parks and Recreation Director.

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

(13) REGION A AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL: A recommendation was submitted by Sarajane Melton, Region A AAA Director.

Motion: *Commissioner Bryson moved to reappoint Kristina Kiska to serve an additional three-year term on the Region A Aging Advisory Council. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(14) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

(15) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: *Commissioner Stribling 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. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

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

There being no further business, Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Stribling seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Mark A. Letson, Chairman