

**MINUTES OF A  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HELD ON  
FEBRUARY 04, 2025**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on February 04, 2025, 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, County Attorney (Via Zoom)
Jenny Lynn Hooper, Commissioner	Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board
Michael Jennings, Commissioner	
John W. Smith, Commissioner	

Chairman Letson called the meeting to order.

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

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Smith moved to approve the minutes of a Regular Meeting of January 21, 2025, as presented. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**: Chairman Letson reported he attended the official Grand Opening of the Aquatics Center, which was a wonderful facility. It was a great, well attended event.

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

(5) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT**: Mr. King reported on the following projects:

(a) **Fair Grounds**: Demolition was underway at the Drexel site at 20% completion.

(b) **Center for Domestic Peace**: The steel had been installed and roofing was underway. They would see more progress in the coming months.

(6) **PUBLIC COMMENT**: Daniel Manring, Executive Director, Tuckasee Water and Sewer, extended an invitation to the Commissioners for TWSA's Annual Meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. It would be a great educational opportunity to learn about all things TWSA.

(7) **RESOLUTION R25-01 APPROVING AMERICA 250 NC COMMITTEE**: Dr. Amber Albert, Director, WCU Mountain Heritage Center, stated in 2026 the United States would be commemorating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. America 250 NC, a program of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NDNCR) was partnering with local governments and nonprofits to mark this anniversary.

She presented Resolution R25-01 Approving an America 250 NC Committee for consideration. She also requested the Board's consideration of appointing individuals to form the committee.

**Motion**: *Commissioner Jennings moved to approve Resolution R25-01 Approving America 250 NC Committee, as presented. Commissioner Smith seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

**(8) HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:**

***Motion:*** Commissioner Jennings moved to appoint Travis Mileti to serve a three-year term on the Historic Preservation Commission. Commissioner Hooper seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

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

***Motion:*** Commissioner Smith moved to reappoint Mark Ellison to serve an additional three-year term on the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(10) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:**

General discussions were held.

Carry over.

**(11) SOUTHWESTERN CHILD DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AREA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

***Motion:*** Commissioner Smith moved to appoint Christi Paxton to serve on the Southwestern Child Development Commission Area Board of Directors. Commissioner Jennings seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**(12) DISTRICT 4 CONSERVATION PLAN:** Owen Carson, Plant Ecologist, Equinox Environmental, presented: District 4 Conservation Plan:

(a) Purpose: To develop a district wide conservation plan to assess the conservation priorities of the communities and generate supporting policy recommendations to ensure the rural, scenic and natural character were conserved in the face of increasing development pressure.

(b) Project Organization:

- Equinox: Consultant, Project Coordinator, Project Management
- MountainTrue: Client, Financial agent, Community conduit
- Steering Committee:
  - Communicate with Equinox on project management needs
  - Participate in monthly meetings on public sessions
  - Promote collaboration between stakeholders
  - Review and provide comments on deliverables
  - Identify and vets key stakeholders
  - Active and engaged with key stakeholders to maintain trust and unity

(c) Project Funding:

- Total budget \$167,500
- Funding details:
  - May 2024 Jackson County \$80,000
  - July 2024 TDA \$40,000
  - August 2024 Community Foundation of WNC \$9,000
  - April–July 2024 Donor fundraising \$38,500

(d) Vision: The Conservation Plan was an authoritative blueprint to make responsible land use decisions that conserve and enhance the biodiverse mountainous landscape forests, streams, rivers, farms, wetlands and wildlife in the face of ever-increasing development pressure and climate challenges. Implementing the strategies and best practices in this plan allowed for a balance between development and land conservation that sustained the unique ecology, rural character and heritage for generations to come.

- (e) Goals:
  - Protect natural and agricultural resources
  - Promote economic growth for farmers and the community by prioritizing farmland preservation
  - Protect the natural and beneficial functions of watersheds
  - Advance resilient development and open space strategies to adapt to future climate impacts
  - Empower communities and educate people to be stewards of the land and to embrace Southern Appalachian natural and cultural heritage
- (f) Project Schedule and Timeline:
  - Project discovery
  - Inventory and assessment of conservation resources
  - Resource analysis developing composite maps
  - Client, stakeholder and public engagement
  - Recommendations
  - Conservation plan document
- (g) Ordinance review and preview:
  - Regulated Districts – Agriculture Districts
  - Growth Corridors
  - Unified Development Ordinance:
    - Open Space
    - Stormwater Drainage
    - Environmental Regulations
  - Cashiers Commercial Area
  - US 441 Gateway District
  - Viewshed Protection
  - Highlands & Macon
- (h) Stakeholder and public engagement February:
  - Finalize Stakeholder List
  - Develop and market Focus Groups:
    - Agriculture/Forestry
    - Conservation
    - Industry/Recreation/Economic Development/Tourism
    - Local Government
    - Nonprofit/Educational/Cultural
  - Real Estate Development
  - Host Focus Groups

General discussions were held.  
*Informational item.*

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

There being no further business, Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Bryson seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Attest:

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Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Approved:

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Mark A. Letson, Chairman