

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
MAY 05, 2016**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on May 05, 2016, 6:00 p.m., Department on Aging, 100 County Services Park, Heritage Room, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Mark Jones, Vice Chair
Charles Elders, Commissioner
Vicki Greene, Commissioner
Boyce Deitz, Commissioner

Chuck Wooten, County Manager
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order and conveyed the Board's appreciation to Eddie Wells and the staff at the Senior Center for providing a meeting space for Commissioners due to the bomb threat at the Justice Center earlier in the day.

(1) **PROCLAMATION**: Chairman McMahan read a Proclamation declaring May as Older Americans Month. Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) **PROCLAMATION**: Chairman McMahan read a Proclamation declaring Jackson County as Purple Heart County. Commissioner Deitz moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **AGENDA**: Chairman McMahan amended the agenda by adding an item: Set Public Hearing for CDBG Closeout. Commissioner Greene moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(4) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Elders moved to approve the minutes of a Work Session of April 19, 2016, a Regular Meeting of April 21, 2016 and a Special Meeting of April 28, 2016. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(5) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**:

(a) Commissioner Greene stated that she had the opportunity to represent the Commissioners last Friday at the Volunteer Appreciation Lunch for the 100 plus volunteers that the Department of Aging had. She extended "hats off" to Eddie Wells and the staff for a fine luncheon.

(b) Commissioner Jones thanked Mr. Wells and staff for providing a space for the meeting, it was appreciated.

(c) Commissioner Elders stated he also appreciated Mr. Wells and staff for the meeting space provided at the Aging Center.

(d) Commissioner Deitz asked everyone to remember their mother that week.

(6) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Wooten reported:

(a) Justice Center Bomb Threat: He thanked the Sheriff's Department and Emergency Services as they responded to the bomb threat at the Justice Center. The review of the building by the bomb dogs did not discover anything out of the ordinary. Also, when the call came in, the word "courthouse" was used, so out of an abundance of caution, the Library (old courthouse) was closed as well. A thorough review of that facility also did not find anything out of the ordinary. Both entities would be returning to a regular schedule the next day.

(b) April Building Permits: New building permits continue to track the same activity level as compared to the same time in 2015. During the month of April, 2016, 16 new residential building permits were issued as compared to 9 in 2015. The permits are split evenly between the Sylva and Cashiers offices. Year to date, 36 new residential permits have been issued as compared to 37 for the same period in 2015. Overall, permits for all activities reflect a 5% increase during the first four months of 2016.

(c) NC Department of Commerce: The Secretary of Commerce, John Scvarla, and his team were in Jackson County on Wednesday presenting to the western 7 counties about the programs they administer. This meeting was part of a statewide initiative to better inform local communities about the programs within the Department.

(d) Trout Capital of North Carolina Designation: Senator Davis has indicated that a local bill cannot be introduced during the short session; however, he will issue a senatorial statement followed by the introduction of a local bill in the 2017 long session, if he is re-elected.

(e) CDBG Grant: All funds have been expended and they were preparing to close the grant. A public hearing would be held at the next meeting to close the grant and to provide an update on the projects that were completed.

(f) Upcoming Meetings:

May 17, 2016	-	May Work Session
May 18, 2016	-	County Assembly Day, NCACC
May 19, 2017	-	Commissioners Meeting
May 20, 2016	-	Artificial Turf Groundbreaking (11:00 am, SMHS Football Stadium)
May 23, 2016	-	Region A (Dinner 6:30 pm)
May 24, 2017	-	Mental Health Regional Meeting of Commissioner representatives and County Managers
May 30, 2016	-	Memorial Day (Offices Closed)
June 2, 2016	-	Commissioners Meeting
June 16, 2016	-	Commissioners Meeting
June 21, 2016	-	June Work Session

(7) PLANNING BOARD REPORT: Scott Baker, Chairman, reported:

(a) Planning Board update: They had been working on the Industrial Development Ordinance. The county planner went back and had discussions with the Commissioners about direction on items they had questions about, which was very helpful. At their next meeting, if all went well, they should have that completed and ready to submit to the Commissioners for approval or changes.

(b) Cullowhee Planning Council: They had their first meeting that past Monday, when they voted on officers. Mr. Baker was elected as Chairman and Jack Debnam was elected as Vice-chair. All six members were present, but they still had one vacant seat. They worked with Mr. Poston and were trying to have a training session before their next regular meeting in June. The regular meeting schedule would be the first Monday of each month. At their meeting, they discussed asking Joel Setzer to give an update on the bridge replacement in Cullowhee.

Commissioner Greene requested the Cullowhee Planning Council give suggestions for the vacant seat to Mr. Poston for Commissioners' consideration.

(8) INFORMAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC:

(a) Betsy Ashby of Dillsboro stated she had read the animal shelter report from Design Learned, Inc. and she thought the statistics used in the report were inaccurate, they did not match what the Humane Society has or what they were seeing in the shelters. Also, she suggested they contact Cherokee as they may be interested in partnering with the county.

(b) Pat Thomas of Sylva stated the bottom line was they needed an animal shelter it was just a matter of refining it. As a taxpayer and business owner in the county, she had an interest in the county evolving and growing. As an animal advocate and someone who was asked to participate on a task force, it would be her expectation to see an animal shelter that could adequately accommodate the needs of the county. After briefly reviewing the needs assessment report and the proposed cost, she understands that the proposition could be cost prohibited as submitted. She did feel that the hospital portion was not necessary at that time. Common sense should really be used in building the shelter.

(c) Allison Padgett of Sylva stated the shelter had not euthanized a dog for space in 18 months and they had been making several transports. The team was working hard, but a new shelter was needed.

(d) Kaleb Lynch of Cullowhee stated he understood this was going to be cost prohibitive and a long process. In the meantime, he requested that they focus on something that could help them in the interim with the transports.

(9) CONSENT AGENDA: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented:

(a) Amendment to Contract to Audit Accounts, for approval.

(b) Four Budget Ordinance Amendments for fiscal year ending June 30, 2016, for approval.

Motion: *Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY UPDATE: Nick Breedlove, Director presented:

(a) FY 2015-16:

- Budget is \$828,000 (estimating \$875,000 through end of this FY)
- Funds are used to market the county and bring visitors and tourists to the area for overnight stays.
- Positive outlook for future tourist spending in the county

(b) Tourism trends in the county - yearly 2014 tourist activity in the county:

- Generated \$171.16 million per year in direct tourist spending
- Generated 1,660 jobs per year
- Generated \$46,356 daily in combined state & local tax revenues

(c) 2014 Tourism tax relief on county households: As a result of taxes generated by tourist spending in the county...each of the 26,574 households pay \$626 less in local and state taxes. In other words, if tourism did not exist, each household would have to pay \$626 more in state and local taxes to replace the taxes generated by tourist spending.

(d) Occupancy Tax Collections:

- FY 2012-2013 - \$578,452
- FY 2013-2014 - \$761,837
- FY 2014-2015 - \$840,968
- FY 2015-2016 - \$875,000
- FY 2016-2017 budgeting for \$900,000

(e) How the funds are used:

- The largest majority goes to Advertising and Marketing
- We market to drive markets NC, SC, GA, TN, AL, FL
- Ad spend is largest portion of budget at around \$300,000 per year. Looking to spend \$380,000 in coming FY 16-17
- Invest every available dollar in advertising

- Funds are also spent for public relations, social media management, printing, postage, providing funding for the chambers and local grants program.
- (f)** 2016-17 Visitor Guide - Delivery this week
- Over 2 months ahead of last year's schedule (delivery last year was July 2)
 - 26% more pages (last year's guide 50 pages, this year 63 pages)
 - New this year:
 - Focus on beautiful imagery to sell the county; worked with local photographers to acquire scenic photos
 - Six pages of 'Favorite things to do in Jackson County'
 - Focus on nightlife, events, weddings & positioning the county as a four-season destination
 - Focusing on 'Leave No Trace' camping to promote environmental stewardship and sustainable tourism
- (g)** Great Smoky Mountains National Park: Last year visits topped 10.7 million, the highest visitation in the Park's history and more than any of the other 59 National Parks.
- (h)** Environmental Stewardship: Tourism has to be sustainable and respect the great natural resources, preserving them for future generations to enjoy. To that extent they were promoting Leave No Trace:
- Plan Ahead and Prepare
 - Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
 - Dispose of Waste Properly
 - Leave What You Find
 - Minimize Campfire Impact
 - Respect Wildlife
 - Be Considerate of Other Visitors
- (i)** Building business-to-business relationships: Biltmore's Gracious Hospitality Course held April 4 at SCC - Regular cost \$995, through grant funding and Partnerships, offered to participants at a cost of \$35. The BRNHA partnered with Duke Energy, ARC and the JCTDA on this effort. They had a class of 45 participants learning 'Plus One' customer service & hospitality skills.
- (j)** Analysis of Tourist Data: They were analyzing multiple data points to make the most strategic use of advertising dollars. They were factoring the following into marketing decisions:
- Social Media Analytics
 - Website Analytics
 - Lead Data (visitor information requests)
 - Hotel visitor feeder cities analysis
 - Smith Travel Research Data (new partner)
- (k)** They recently analyzed 8,213 visitor inquiries from last July to present. They took the data and plotted zip codes to see where most interest about the county was coming from. The results confirmed and validated their existing marketing program goals, but also presented new opportunities to consider and study further.
- (l)** FAM (familiarization) trips:
- Bring media to the county to showcase best it has to offer – lodging, dining, recreation.
 - 2-3 media attendees per trip
 - April – NC Beer month FAM
 - June – Fitness FAM
 - October – Leaf looking FAM
 - Coverage of FAM trips appears in magazines, newspaper and online. Takes up to a year for placement.
- (m)** NYC Media Mission – Jan 26: A reception-trade show hybrid offers partners a chance to network with key editors, writers, producers, bloggers and qualified freelance travel writers in the New York area. This year over 120 media attended. Interest from Nat Geo Traveler & Self Magazine.

(n) PR Investment and ROI: \$54,000 investment = \$1,000,000 Return on Investment

Earned Media Coverage, or publicity is one of the most trusted and credible forms of media used to generate awareness for the county. It carries the unbiased third-party endorsement of an independent expert- the writer, editor, blogger or broadcast anchor – who is recommending the destination and sharing their experience. In addition, these stories can live on long past the immediate impact of advertising and gain additional “legs” as content for social and digital (web) platforms further spreading the word.

(o) Director’s Role: Taking on the Director’s role January 1 has been a rewarding opportunity to help influence and grow tourism in the county. Since Jan. 1, by the numbers:

- Over 90 meetings held with local, regional and state tourism, business, community members and stakeholders
- 6 professional development conferences & workshops attended
- 6 presentations to community groups on TDA efforts
- Assisted with planning for Greening Up the Mountains & working with planners for Mountain Heritage Day (our two largest events)

(p) Activity Updates:

- Office established in Dillsboro Visitor Center
- Created a countywide photo library of attractions, lodging, events & activities. He continued to document the events to build on out the library for marketing and promotional purposes.
- Created a video library that continues to grow. Plans call for using clips to create a county promotional video this fall.
- Created a comprehensive accommodations database for the county
- Conducting a tourism resource audit to best understand what tourism assets they had in place in the county.
- Created a countywide events calendar (from both Chambers, communities, WCU, Harrah’s and others)
- Create a TDA news library with every historical story about the TDA since 2011 from all area newspapers.
- The JCTDA partnered with Smith Travel Research to better understand changes in occupancy trends in the county and will utilize that data for better marketing decisions.
- Partnership with Kevin Adams, author of NC Waterfalls to license comprehensive county waterfall information on JCTDA’s new website.
- Developed and distributed a county-wide survey on facilities that can be utilized for business conferences and sports-related tourism.

(q) Films in the county:

- Dirty Dancing filming May 8-13 at High Hampton Inn
- Three Billboards filming May 2-3, 10-13, 16, 18-20 in Sylva

(r) Anglers & Appetites:

- The county is filming a third season of Anglers & Appetites this week (May 3-6) across the county.
- Television show focuses on fishing and dining.
- Estimated reach of 25 million viewers for last season
- Airs on Fox Sports South and Fox Sun
- This season will feature:
 - Lulu’s, Guadalupe & City Lights Café in a Badia Spices Challenge
 - Flip ‘N Whip food truck, Cashiers’ Ugly Dog Pub and High Hampton Inn
 - Kyle Fronrath / Fontana Guides spinning reels on the Tuckaseige
 - Matt Canter / Brookings doing a Float trip on the Tuck
 - Austin Neary / Dreamcatcher guides lake fishing at Bear Lake
 - Flyfishing with Alex Bell / AB Flyfishing on the Tuck

(s) Sports Tourism: The JCTDA is beginning discussions with Western Carolina University to understand better how they can promote sports events and in turn, drive more overnight visits to the county. There was tremendous opportunity in a joint partnership with WCU.

(t) Total Solar Eclipse – August 21, 2017: They were beginning planning efforts related to events surrounding the Aug. 21, 2017 Total Solar Eclipse. Jackson County is in the prime viewing area for this event. It's expected to draw thousands from out of town to view. We'll be holding stakeholder meetings in the coming months to plan for events & public safety concerns surrounding the once-in-a-lifetime event. The average number of years between eclipses turns out to be nearly 534 years. Considering the relatively small survey of 25 cities, this is reasonably close to the once-in-almost four-century rule.

Informational item only.

(11) ANIMAL SHELTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Paula Carden, Health Director presented portions of the Animal Shelter Evaluation, Space Needs, Program Report:

(a) Existing Facility Conditions: A site visit to evaluate and visually inspect the existing shelter and to observe its functionality and condition was done between February 24th and 25th. The existing facility was constructed about 30 years ago or around 1986 and consists of two basic function areas. The shelter was designed using some concepts that are no longer recommended for modern animal shelter construction, such as the open trench drains located at the front of the runs and in the public walkway. There was insufficient separation of animal populations for adoption, healthy holding, isolation and quarantine. There were very limited acoustical design measures to help control noise within the dog housing area. Additionally, the condition of the building had declined largely due to age and the extreme wear common in animal shelters that are in heavy use on a 24 hour basis for 365 days per year.

(b) Recommendations regarding renovation of the existing shelter: The existing shelter is not a good candidate for renovation or expansion. This conclusion is based on a visual inspection of the shelter and site, knowledge of current animal facility standards including the *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters* published by the Association of Shelter Veterinarians and the current physical condition of the building. The site does not lend itself to additional building, parking or facility functioning such as a sally port addition. Further, the separation in the dog kennels and cat housing, to accommodate adoption animals from animals in healthy hold, isolation and aggressive dogs, would be difficult. Based on the list of improvements that would be required, the consultants believe that to renovate or expand the shelter would not be good use of county funds.

(c) Current Shelter Program Related Influences on Housing Capacity: It is most important to consider what is currently happening at the shelter and how animal housing capacity affects the services being provided to the community. This is housing capacity that is needed to serve current programs or any growth in programs. A review of recent Length of Stay (LOS) reports, which document how long animals remain in the shelter, demonstrates that the LOS is longer than the 3 day mandatory period. The average LOS for all dogs run 6.7 to 9.8 days. For cats the LOS is much longer at 15.3 to 18.5 days. In one instance, there were 2 dogs that combined had a LOS of 69.7 days. This exemplifies how a situation, such an animal abuse or neglect court case, can tie up otherwise available housing for animals that are healthy and adoptable or eligible for transport.

The county does a good job transferring adoptable animals to other local shelters such as Catman2 and the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society or through ARF transport programs. In 2015, 70 animals, mostly cats, were transferred to other local shelters for adoption. This cooperative practice is helpful in efforts to increase live release rates and lower euthanasia rates. However, both Catman2 and Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society are limited admission shelters and cannot be expected to provide housing space for all adoptable animals entering the Animal Shelter.

The table below shows the shelter capacity recommended to provide sufficient animal housing to accommodate growth in demand for services to meet statutory requirements of the 3 day holding period, to provide proper separation of animal population and to meet the current program operating at the shelter.

	Average daily intake	Minimum housing required to meet 3 day holding period	Minimum housing required to meet 25% growth	Program housing	Housing desired to sustain program
Cats	4	12	15	35 cats / 5 kittens	50 cats / 5 kittens
Dogs	5	15	19	26 dogs / 5 puppies	45 dogs / 5 puppies

(d) Animal Housing Capacity and Shelter Size to Accommodate Current Needs and Growth: An animal shelter should be adequately sized to accommodate all the functions required to house and care for the animals and conduct business of animal services. Animal housing capacity is needed for approximately 50 cats and 45 dogs. These housing units do not include temporary holding, such as for intake, isolation or veterinary treatment, that is required to in-process and access animal health.

Informational item only.

(12) CDBG PROJECT CLOSE OUT – PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST:

Motion: Commissioner Elders moved to set a public hearing on May 19th at 5:45 p.m. to be held at the Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(13) RESOLUTION: LEASING PROPERTY FOR A TERM OF UP TO TEN YEARS (R-16-09): Ms. Baker stated this resolution would approve the lease for county property located at 271 Clearwood Drive, Whittier, NC with Thomas Valley Growers, LLC. The upset bid period had expired with no upset bid and no public comments received. The lease would begin on May 6, 2016 for five years with an optional additional five year term.

Motion: Commissioner Deitz moved to adopt Resolution R16-09 to approve a lease with Thomas Valley Growers, LLC. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(14) ABC BOARD:

Motion: Commissioner Elders moved to reappoint Donald Ferguson to serve another three year term on the ABC Board, term expiring June 30, 2019. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Motion: Commissioner Jones moved to reappoint David Noland to serve a one year term as the Chairman of the ABC Board, term expiring June 30, 2017. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(15) TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD:

Motion: Commissioner Elders moved to approve Henry Dowling as Chairman and Eddie Wells as Vice-Chair of the Transit Advisory Board. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

(16) SEDIMENT CONTROL APPEALS BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Deitz moved to appoint Matt Nicholson to serve a four year term on the Sediment Control Appeals Board, term expiring March 9, 2020. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(17) CULLOWHEE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE: *Carry over.*

(18) HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: *Carry over.*

(19) PRESS CONFERENCE: None

(20) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: *Commissioner Greene moved that the Board go into closed session for one item pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(5) Real Property. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

Chairman McMahan called the regular meeting back to order and stated no action was taken in closed session.

There being no further business, Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Greene seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman