

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
AUGUST 07, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on August 07, 2017, 3:00 p.m., Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Charles Elders, Vice Chair
Boyce Deitz, Commissioner
Mickey Luker, Commissioner
Ron Mau, Commissioner

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

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) **AGENDA**: Chairman McMahan amended the agenda by adding an item: Downtown Revitalization Grant. Commissioner Elders moved to approve the amended Agenda. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Elders moved to approve the minutes of a Work Session of July 11, 2017 and a Regular Meeting of July 17, 2017. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**:

(a) Commissioner Luker congratulated Commissioner Mau on his son's wedding over the past weekend. Also, he attended the After Hours Event at the Cashiers Chamber of Commerce and it was a fantastic, well-attended event. There were a lot of people interested in sewer and water.

(b) Commissioner Elders stated he appreciated all of the Commissioners attending the Region A meeting. He had a Health Board meeting and was unable to attend the Region A meeting. The Health Department was gearing up for the flu season and had a lot going on at the time.

(c) Commissioner Deitz thanked Sarah Thompson for the Region A meeting.

(4) **COUNTY MANAGER REPORT**: Mr. Adams reported:

(a) **Skyland Service Center Remodel**: A notice to proceed was issued to Western Builders on July 18th and work commenced on July 19th. In accordance with the contract documents, the project must be substantially complete by January 15, 2018.

(b) **Citizens Academy**: As of August 4th, the county had received 15 applications. The deadline for Applications was August 16th. Applications could be found on the county website home page at www.jacksonnc.org.

(c) **Solar Eclipse Discussions – County Operating Hours**: At that point the county would be operating under normal business hours on August 21st, during the solar eclipse. There were many county employees who would be working events directly related with the solar eclipse. Recreation employees would be working at designated viewing areas (Cullowhee Recreation Department, Cashiers and East Laporte). Maintenance and grounds-keeping would be working directly with Emergency Management to provide any assistance deemed appropriate. The Sheriff would have the majority, if not all of his employees working throughout the county.

The remainder of the employees would operate under normal procedures with some requested suggestions. Employees would request time off from their supervisors under normal procedures. He planned to send out a notice to all employees, provide a pair of free solar glasses and safety viewing information. He was also encouraging all department heads to work with their employees to allow them to view this rare event. Finally, with the permission of the Board, he wanted to give departments the authority to shut down their offices for at least one to two hours in order for all employees to witness this event.

Chairman McMahan stated he thought this was a good plan. He thought the county should remain open for business to the public.

Commission Luker stated that the schools had decided to close on that day and this would be an event that most would not be able to see again in their lifetime. The event would bring in a large group of people to the area and he was in favor of closing and treating it as a snow day or an administrative leave day, so that employees could enjoy the day with their family.

Commissioner Mau stated he thought they should remaining open and give employees time in the afternoon for viewing the eclipse. Also, employees could schedule time off, if they wanted.

Commissioner Elders stated he agreed they should remain open.

Commissioner Deitz stated they should close offices at noon on that day. This was a unique event and he did not believe there would be a lot of people coming to the Justice Center to do business on that day.

Mr. Adams stated that surrounding counties were handling the event in several different ways. Cherokee County had initially stated they would close at noon, but realized that they would be releasing employees during a high-traffic time of the day. He suggested closing a whole day rather than a half day. If the Board decided to close, he would request that employees that were mandated to work on that day, be given compensatory time.

Danielle Wittekind, Human Resource Director, stated that several surrounding counties were still in deliberations about closing, but Cherokee would be closing all tribal governmental offices, except essential safety personnel and treating the day as a 13th holiday for all employees, just for this calendar year. The employees that would be required to work on that holiday would receive compensatory time.

Mr. Adams stated that it was requested that the transfer station stay open until noon as there were some trucks coming in.

Chad Parker, Public Works Director, stated that at that point, they were going to leave the Staffed Recycling Centers open, but if the county closed, he suggested to close those as well.

Mr. Adams recommended that if the Board decided to close, to treat the day as a snow day or holiday and employees that were mandated to work would be provided the traditional compensatory time.

Chairman McMahan stated that he understood what had been requested to allow employees to be off on that day and he would be willing to agree to that, but would like the day to be treated as a holiday. They would need to take action on the item later in the meeting.

(d) Upcoming Meetings:

Tuesday, August 8, 2017 – Special Meeting for Health Dept/Facility Discussions at 3:00 pm

Tuesday, August 15, 2017 - Commissioner Work Session at 1:00 pm

Monday, August 28, 2017 – Regular Commissioner Meeting at 6:00 pm

Tuesday, September 12, 2017 – Commissioner Work Session at 1:00 pm

Monday, September 18, 2017 – Regular Commissioner Meeting at 6:00 pm

(5) INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC: Ralph Slaughter of Glenville stated the funds coming to Sylva, via the Downtown Revitalization Grant was generated, in large part by House Member Mike Clampitt.

(6) CONSENT AGENDA: Darlene Fox, Finance Director, presented a Budget Ordinance Amendment for fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, for approval.

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

(7) STUDENT PRESENTATION: Chairman McMahan stated that the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' Annual Conference would be held in Durham that weekend and each year, there was a youth conference held simultaneously. Former Association President Mary Aker started this program and she was a great advocate for the youth. The program brought together youth from across the state and gave them an opportunity to interact with County Commissioners. This year, they had a youth representative from Jackson County, Holly Miller.

Ms. Miller stated that part of the requirement for the Youth Summit was to appear before the Commissioners and speak about the club she was part of in the 4-H Branch. She was a part of the Jackson County Youth Leadership Council and they aimed to be a youth voice in the community and gave high school students an opportunity to better their community, whether that be the county or the world.

They hosted and planned a number of events, including charitable events such as a shoe cutting party for Sole Hope, which provided shoes for communities in Africa as well as jobs. They also hosted an event every June "Spring Into Summer", which was a way to close out the school year with fun. The Youth Leadership Council gave her a lot of opportunities, such as attending the Youth Conference and taught her how to plan events, budget and publicize events to make them successful.

Commissioner Luker thanked Ms. Miller for being involved in 4-H. He spent many years in his youth in 4-H, which held some of his best memories as a child. He commended Ms. Miller for an excellent job.

Commissioner Elders stated that he also was in the 4-H Club in the mid-50's and it afforded him many opportunities to travel across the state. He appreciated Ms. Miller and what she was doing.

Informational item.

(8) SOUTHWESTERN COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT: Sarah Thompson, Executive Director, thanked the county for hosting the annual dinner. Once a year, she visited each of the County Commissions in the region to give an update and distribute the most recent annual report. The Southwestern Commission was the Council of Government (COGS) for Region A, which was the south western counties west of Haywood County and the 17 municipalities within. They had been around 52 years, providing service in the region and were created in the mid-60s when federal programs that brought aid to the local communities, were put into place. Regional organizations were determined to be the most efficient way to get those federal funds to the local level.

They ran three primary departments:

- Area Agency on Aging, which brought in over \$2mil.
- Workforce Development Department, which brought approximately \$2mil.
- Community Economic Development Department, which was not a pass-through department.

They raised their local funds through per capita dues, which the county paid \$0.75 per capita. They raised less than \$200,000 in local dues, but leverage it for a \$6mil budget. The county's involvement and support of the agency was what kept them going and able to bring the federal funds into the region. Jackson County paid \$28,000 in dues each year, but got over \$360,000 just in aging services.

The Commission was administering a new economic development partnership, Mountain West Partnership, which had a board of directors comprised of the economic development directors from the seven western counties. Rich Price, Jackson County's Economic Development Director, was the Chairman of the Board. It was a marketing initiative for the region and could be found at wnc.org.

They were also kicking off a regional broadband assessment that month that would continue through next year, working with each county's broadband committee as this was the number one economic development issue in the region. They began a program to hold orientation for newly elected officials and urged the Commissioners to attend. Also, they created a comprehensive economic development strategy for the region that showed out the path forward and the strategies they need to tackle to get where they want to be.

Chairman McMahan stated he appreciated the work of Region A and they were a valuable partner and resource for the county.

Commissioner Deitz stated they were lucky to have Region A located in Jackson County and they also helped to start the stockyard in Haywood County.

Commissioner Luker stated that Region A did a lot of work in the county for the elderly.
Informational item.

(9) SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SERVICE SIDEARM: The Sheriff's Department requested authorization, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 20-187.2, to present Gracia Blackburn, who retired on August 1, 2017, her service sidearm. The Sheriff recommended that the price for the sidearm be set at \$1.00. It was recommended that the firearms be declared surplus and the Sheriff be authorized to present the sidearm to Ms. Blackburn. In addition, the Sheriff should be directed to provide the serial number and description of the weapon to the Finance Director for removal from the fixed asset inventory and replace with a new sidearm at no cost to the county.

Motion: *Commissioner Elders moved to declare Gracia Blackburn's sidearm surplus and authorize the Sheriff to present it to Ms. Blackburn. The Sheriff was directed to provide the serial number and description of the sidearm to the Finance Director and replace the sidearm at no cost to the county. Commissioner Deitz seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) DUKE POWER LEASE EXTENSION: Chad Parker, Public Works Director, presented an amendment to lease with Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC. The extension was for the property being leased from Duke for the Tuckasegee Staffed Recycling Center site. The extension was for one year, but would continue yearly if neither party wished to terminate. Also, there would be a 3% increase in the lease amount annually. He requested that the Commissioners consider approving the extension.

Motion: *Commissioner Luker moved to approve the amendment to lease for the Tuckasegee SRC, as presented. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) EMPLOYEE SAFETY FOR THE SOLAR ECLIPSE: Ms. Wittekind stated that on Monday, August 21st, there would be a solar eclipse, whose direct path included Jackson County. A packet would be distributed to all employees, which included a memo, an eclipse safety trifold as well as eclipse glasses, which were provided by the Jackson County Library. A cross-section of staff met to discuss employee safety as it related to the eclipse. A number of issues were discussed such as eye safety, liability and public safety staff. They also developed a memo to staff regarding operations and general eclipse information as well as developing a trifold with information that would be easy for public safety staff to hand out to the general public.

Mr. Adams stated that if the Board decided to close on August 21st, they would revise the memo to be distributed it to all employees with the trifold and glasses.

Motion: *Commissioner Luker moved to declare August 21st as the 13th holiday for the calendar year 2017. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

Mr. Adams stated that as a reminder, August 21st would be a holiday with the exception of keeping the transfer station open until noon, the recreation department employees would still need to remain scheduled to work and along with those who worked along with emergency management would be provided compensatory time.

(12) COUNTY ECLIPSE PLANS: Nick Breedlove, JCTDA Executive Director, presented: Total Solar Eclipse Monday, August 21, 2017:

(a) A solar eclipse happens when the Moon, in the “new moon phase” passes between Earth and the Sun.

(b) The total solar eclipse 2017 had been coined “The Great American Solar Eclipse” because it would be the only solar eclipse to appear across the entire continent of North America in recent history.

(c) The last total solar eclipse viewable in the county was July 20, 1506. The next total solar eclipse to pass through the county will be October 17, 2153.

(d) On average, only 1 in 1,000 people have ever witnessed a total solar eclipse.

(e) During an eclipse:

- Air temperatures can drop from 10 to 20 degrees.
- Bright stars and planets will become more visible during the solar eclipse.
- Animals may behave as if night had arrived – cows go back to barns and birds stop chirping.

(f) 200 million people live within a day’s drive of the path of “totality. Around 20,000 people were expected in the county.

(g) JCTDA Efforts:

- The JCTDA led planning in Q1, 2016 for the Solar Eclipse, over 500 days ago, Representatives from education, healthcare, economic development, planning, tourism, infrastructure and government were at the table.
- Early stakeholder meetings allowed the county to formulate plans for eclipse viewing sites, public safety, educational events and more. With these in place they were able to position the county as a prime viewing site for the eclipse.
- The JCTDA created and funded a Solar Eclipse Grant Program to allow for two public events in Cashiers and Sylva. The Chamber Directors and town manager worked with the JCTDA on event plans and the TDA granted \$9,000 for programming the events. Funds were being used for entertainment, event promotion, bathrooms, signage and cleanup.
- Created www.NCEclipse.com with event information, events, lodging availability, parking maps, visitor tips, and more. Over 17,000 site visits to date.
- Worked with the N.C. DOT Congestion Management office to better understand traffic impact. The study they generated will optimize traffic timings/patterns in the county.
- Lodging – 100% occupancy rate expected for Aug. 20. All accommodations sold out.
- Chambers will staff tents at event sites. JCTDA will provide free water and sunscreen at both events. This solar eclipse will likely be the first time many of these visitors have been here; they wanted them to have a great experience to turn them into repeat visitors. They created a ‘Visitor Bucket List’ of things to check out while here.
- Worked with the restaurant industry in the county to prepare them for the demand expected and maintain quality-of-service.
- Through the early promotion of events, they positioned the county as one of the premier places in the country to view the Eclipse.
- Through JCTDA public relations efforts, they had 122,935,820 impressions, totaling an editorial value: \$1,867,542.57 and was featured in numerous publications.

(h) Events for the eclipse in the county. There would be two designated event sites:

- Cashiers Village Green
- Sylva’s Bridge Park
- Viewers also observe at Monteith Park, Cullowhee and Cashiers Rec Centers, East Laporte and anywhere with a clear view of the sky.

(i) Cashiers Eclipse Fest:

- August 21st Solar Fest: Visitors can try several local food trucks such as Glenville's own Flip & Whip, enjoy beer by The Ugly Dog Public House and Satulah Mountain Brewing, and sweet treats and ice cream from Cream & Flutter.
- A live music performance by Coconut Groove, a 60's/70's cover band, will entertain guests throughout the day.
- The U.S. Postal Service will be on site to sell and cancel commemorative Solar Eclipse stamps.

(j) Sylva Eclipse Fest:

- The weekend kicks off at Bridge Park with Concerts on the Creek on Friday, August 18th where the popular band, Porch 40, will be playing from 7-9 p.m. During the evening, visitors can purchase Moon Pies and food from an on-site food truck.
- On Saturday, August 19th from 4-6 p.m., enjoy a special headliner concert with a performance by A Social Function, and gather in downtown Sylva for live music and entertainment after the Arts and Crafts festival in Dillsboro.
- On Saturday night, Historic Downtown Sylva will host Moonlight Madness where its shops will stay open late with special deals and offerings. Later that night at 9:30 p.m., there will be a moonlight run at the Parks and Recreation Center in Cullowhee.
- On Sunday, August 20th at 6 p.m., Solar Eclipse educational panels will be held at Southwestern Community College with Astronomy Professors and subject matter experts.
- On Monday, Aug. 21st, the day of the TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE, festivities begin at Bridge Park around 11 a.m. with a performance by the Colby Deitz Band, as well as talks from subject matter experts leading up to the eclipse, totality would be at 2:35 p.m. Join us on the big day for demonstrations, food trucks, and much more!

Informational item.

(13) SOLAR ECLIPSE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN: Todd Dillard, Emergency Management Director, stated they would open the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) starting at 7am to 7pm Saturday, Sunday and Monday. County Emergency Services would be in the EOC, which had also been designated as a regional EOC for the Department of Transportation, NC Highway Patrol, State Bureau of Investigation and North Carolina Emergency Management. Included were the seven far-western counties and ECBI, which were in the total solar eclipse path and would be running regional operations in the area. Also, they would have a NC Highway Patrol helicopter stationed at the Jackson County Airport that would be a regional resource.

He would issue a Code Red notification on Thursday evening to county residents to give a safety briefing and encourage them to view the event from home, if possible. Fire, rescue and EMS would be fully staffed on Monday and have increased staff on Saturday and Sunday.

Sheriff Hall stated he was glad to see the move to go ahead and close county offices on the 21st. The Highway Patrol would have 40 troopers stationed in the western district the day of the event, with 13 being assigned to Jackson County. All of his staff, with the exception of four deputies, would be working on the 21st and his department would have a briefing at the Justice Center at 9am. They would be receiving mutual aid from Iredell County, so there would be Iredell County Deputies working in Jackson County on the 21st.

Each event site that Mr. Breedlove discussed would have a minimum of five deputies assigned to each site, with the exception of the Village Green, which would have ten deputies assigned. He was confident they had a good plan in place and did not foresee any major problems.

Informational item.

(14) JCPC BOARD MEMBERSHIP: Ms. Baker stated that recently, the Commissioners approved the certification documents for JCPC, as requested by Steve Lillard. They were getting ready to start their new year and had three changes in board members that would require the Commissioners' approval. The changes were as follows:

- Local Health Director or designee: Janelle Messer, Health Ed. Supervisor
- Representative Parks/Rec: Lance Elzie, Outdoor Recreation Manager
- Director DSS or designee: Ginger Hill, Social Worker

Motion: *Commissioner Luker moved to approve the certification with the change of board members. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(15) DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION GRANT: Mr. Adams stated he received a letter from Napoleon Wallace at the NC Rural Economic Development Division. The county had been awarded \$35,000 for downtown revitalization. In order to receive the grant, the county had to go through certain steps in order to qualify for the funds. The county qualified for the grant under Downtown Revitalization: Local governments identified in NC Session Law 2017-257 Section 15.8 (a). Downtown revitalization projects can include:

- Planning costs that will produce a final plan for physical improvements, including architectural and engineering design;
- Streetscape design and implementation;
- Public infrastructure, including water, sewer, electric, lighting, sidewalk, traffic, road and/or digital infrastructure improvements;
- Façade or building improvements and/or property acquisition;
- Wayfinding signage; or
- Art or cultural installations.

When looking at the timelines, the application was due to the state by September 15th. He would immediately start sending out information to the towns and request they submit to the county any suggested or requested items to the county the week prior to September 12th. This item could be an item of discussion at the Commissioners at the September 12th work session.

Informational item.

(16) CULLOWHEE COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENTS: Caroline Edmonds, Planner I, stated that the Cullowhee Planning Council and the Planning Staff worked on amendments to Article IV Section 4-1 and 4-4 (General and Special Use Districts) of the ordinance. These proposed changes address setbacks for single family dwellings and clarify density standards in the multi-family districts. The Cullowhee Planning Council held a public hearing on May 1, 2017 and recommended approval of these amendments to the Planning Board. The Planning Board held a public hearing on July 20, 2017 and recommended approval to the Board of Commissioners. The Planning Board's Statement of Consistency was attached for review. She requested that the Board of Commissioners consider calling a public hearing regarding these amendments for August 28, 2017.

Motion: *Commissioner Mau moved to set a public hearing on August 28th at 5:50 p.m. to be held at the Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(17) CASHIERS COMMERCIAL AREA LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

AMENDMENTS: Caroline Edmonds, Planner I, stated that the Cashiers Planning Council and the Planning Staff have worked on amendments to Article VII (General Use Districts) of the ordinance. These proposed changes require the construction of sidewalks along the full length of a parcel when it was being developed or redeveloped for or changed to a nonresidential use, along public thoroughfares. The sidewalks shall meet the minimum design standards set forth in the NC DOT Traditional Neighborhood Development standards. The Cashiers Planning Council held a public hearing on June 26, 2017 and recommended approval of these amendments to the Planning Board. The Planning Board held a public hearing on July 20, 2017 and recommended approval to the Board of Commissioners. The Planning Board's Statement of Consistency was attached for review. She request that the Board of Commissioners consider calling a public hearing regarding these amendments for August 28, 2017.

Motion: *Commissioner Luker moved to set a public hearing on August 28th at 5:55 p.m. to be held at the Justice & Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(18) RESOLUTION DECLARING PROPERTY SURPLUS (R17-12): Ms. Baker presented a resolution declaring property surplus and authorizing the sale of property. The Commissioners recently adopted a policy regarding the sale of surplus real property owned by the county. In furtherance of that policy, a list of county properties acquired through foreclosure, along with the deed date and amount of money the county had in the property attached to the resolution. This resolution would declare these properties surplus and allow county staff to move forward with accepting offers for the correct amount, pursuant to the policy.

Motion: *Commissioner Elders moved to adopt the Resolution Declaring Property Surplus (R17-12), as presented. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(19) PRESS CONFERENCE: Roy Burnette of WRGC Radio stated that regarding the eclipse, he felt that one of his responsibilities as being local radio, was to try and provide accessibility for which they could be an emergency conduit for information. Some past experiences of covering events of large turnouts of people, cell phone services were interrupted because of saturation of bandwidth. They were working on a side-band system, by which they would be able to provide additional communications so that if the need arose, they would be able to get that additional information out over the airways.

(20) CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: *Commissioner Luker moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(3) Legal for one item. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

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

There being no further business, Commissioner Mau moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Deitz seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman