

**MINUTES OF A
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
DECEMBER 11, 2017**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on December 11, 2017, 6:00 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**: Commissioner Elders moved to approve the Agenda. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(2) **MINUTES**: Commissioner Mau noted a correction to the minutes of changing the reference to “Chancellor Byers” to “Vice Chancellor Byers”. Commissioner Elders moved to approve the following minutes with the noted correction: a Work Session of November 14, 2017; a Special Meeting (DSS/Health Department) of November 16, 2017; a Regular Meeting of November 20, 2017; a Public Hearing (Wireless Tower) of November 27, 2017; a Special Meeting (Wireless Tower) of November 27, 2017; and a Reconvened Meeting of November 27, 2017. Commissioner Mau seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

(3) **CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**: Chairman McMahan reported:

(a) On November 28th he attended the Vaya Health County Commissioner Advisory Board. They talked about the Medicaid Transformation update and voted on a resolution for financial equivalency regarding pay grades and positions. Vaya had a very favorable analysis on a Gaps Report that was issued. Also, they received a preliminary report from the Western North Carolina Substance Use Alliance with their comprehensive strategic plan, which was a good report.

(b) On November 30th he attended the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) Environment Steering Committee meeting. He enjoyed the discussion about floodplain management and mitigation and he shared that information with the Planning Director Michael Poston. Also on that day, they had a legislative update regarding replacing the voting machines, which the mandate was still in place, with an approaching deadline. Currently, there was a lawsuit and there was really not a State Board of Elections at that time. Because of that, staff at the State Board of Elections recommended that the deadline to buy new machines be extended. They would be presenting this to the legislature as a recommendation from staff at the Board of Elections.

(c) On December 6th, he along with Mr. Adams and Jennifer Abshire, DSS Director, attended a regional meeting in Asheville for “Helping Our Children Thrive” sponsored by the NCACC. The meeting was regarding issues facing children, particularly keeping children healthy and providing them with a stable life.

(d) On December 7th he attended the Justice and Public Safety and the Tax and Finance Committee Meetings. The topics of that day were the federal budget, tax reform and the impact it may have on counties. Also, the 911 Academy was a topic at the Justice and Public Safety meeting. Nash County won an award for the creation of a 911 Academy that would be implemented statewide for training 911 telecommunicators.

(4) COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

(a) Commissioner Deitz stated he understood they were working to get an agreement with the Tribe on the water situation at Smokey Mountain Elementary School, which they had worked on a long time. He thanked Chief Sneed, Vice Chief B. Ensley and the Tribal Council and he looked forward to seeing that happen. Also, he congratulated Coach Briggs and the Cherokee Braves on the State Championship win. That was a great thing for the Tribe, this area and the Smokey Mountain Conference, as that was not an easy task. He had two former players that were coaching for Cherokee that had won two state championships for him when he was coaching, Craig Barker and John Mitchell.

(b) Commissioner Elders thanked Chairman McMahan for the time he had spent attending meetings for the county. Also, he had attended meetings for Mountain Projects and all looked good and their goal was to do more in Jackson County next year.

(c) Commissioner Luker stated that regarding the water system for Smokey Mountain Elementary, he was fortunate to have attended the Council Meeting on Tuesday. He was able to speak before the Council and he thanked the Council for supporting and working with them. He was also able to be a part of the resolution and he appreciated the opportunity. He congratulated Coach Briggs and the Braves for being State 1A Champions. He knew what Coach Briggs was going through as he had battled that battle as well. Coach Briggs was not able to attend the Council Meeting because of having a treatment and he also had a treatment on Monday – amazing. Also, he had the great opportunity that week to go to Raleigh on a personal note, but also he attended the Highway Patrol graduation. Two Jackson County men graduated, Hunter Gass and Lucas Brooks and he was very proud of them.

(d) Commissioner Mau congratulated the Cherokee Braves and Coach Briggs. Coach Briggs had went through a lot. It was great news about the Smokey Mountain Elementary water system. He thanked the Secretary of Operations, Jeremy Hyatt, as he had been instrumental in getting this going. Also, with the high speed internet issue in the county, WCU had an RFP out where they were going to partner with someone, as they were giving access to all of their power poles, so that everyone on the WCU power system may have another option for internet in the future.

(5) COUNTY MANAGER REPORT: Mr. Adams noted that the county offices did close early on Friday and they did close the SRC sites on Saturday due to the amount of snow that was received. All was back fully operational that day.

He reported:

(a) **Skyland Services Center Remodel:** Work commenced on July 19, 2017. In accordance with the contract documents the project must be substantially complete by January 15, 2018. The schedule indicated that Western Builders was on schedule. Cooperative Extension and Soil and Water had selected finishes and would be finalizing furniture selections soon.

(b) **Health Department/Code Enforcement/Planning:** McMillan/Pazden/Smith Architects started working on designing the current Skyland Community Center to house Code Enforcement and Planning along with the Health Department. The Architect team met with Code Enforcement and Planning staff and toured their facilities on October 25th. The new programming information would be sent out to departments soon for feedback. Once feedback was provided, then new schematics could be created. The goal was to have the new design and cost estimates completed by February, 2018.

(c) **Courthouse Renovations:** The county issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from architectural firms for planning and design of renovating two courtrooms, adding an additional courtroom and re-configuring the prisoner transport area. There were currently seven architectural firms that had expressed interest in this project.

(d) Indoor Pool Referendum: The county received three statements of qualifications (SOQ). The architectural firms were McMillan/Pazden/Smith, Clarknexsen and Cope Architecture. These SOQs had been reviewed by staff, interviews were conducted on November 30th and recommendations would be made to the Board during the December 12th work session.

(e) Smokey Mountain Elementary School Water System: On Tuesday, December 5th the EBCI Budget Council passed a resolution that would assist in providing reliable, safe water and fire protection to Smokey Mountain Elementary School. The project consisted of installing both six and eight inch water lines with five fire hydrants onto the school campus. Water would be purchased from the EBCI system. The anticipated cost of the project was \$304,000. The EBCI agreed to fund \$118,560 (39%) of this project. This matches the 60 month average of enrolled EBCI students at Smokey Mountain Elementary. County staff, school staff and EBCI staff would meet on December 13th to begin working out the details. He extended appreciation to Principal Chief Richard Sneed, Paint Town Council Representative Tommye Saunooke (for introducing the resolution), Secretary of Operations Jeremy Hyatt and the entire Tribal Council for partnering with Jackson County on this important project.

(f) Upcoming Meetings:

Tuesday, December 12, 2017 – Commissioner Work Session at 1:00 pm
Monday, December 18, 2017 – Regular Commissioner Meeting at 3:00 pm
Monday, January 8, 2018 – Regular Commissioner Meeting at 3:00 pm
Tuesday, January 16 2018 – Commissioner Work Session at 1:00 pm
Monday, January 29, 2018 – Consolidation Public Hearing at 5:00 pm
Monday, January 29 2018 – Regular Commissioner Meeting at 6:00 pm

(6) INFORMAL COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC: Jonathan Sellers of Cullowhee stated he was representing Alpha Omega Broadband, LLC and they delivered high speed internet to residents on Cullowhee Mountain. From what he could tell from the ordinance, it looked as though everything was based off towers. Their service did not need a tower and they did not obtain permits for their current subscribers. He did not understand all of the procedures and inquired if they needed permits.

Chairman McMahan stated he would need to speak with Michael Poston, Planning Director and he could provide him with all of the necessary information that he would need to make sure they were compliant.

(7) FY2016-17 AUDIT REPORT: Brian Broom of Dixon Hughes, PLLC, presented a summary of the audit report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2017. The audit reflected county assets exceeded its liabilities at the close of the fiscal year by \$58,424,820. The general fund balance increased approximately \$1.7 million. The unreserved fund balance was approximately \$2.7 million and represented 46% of general fund expenditures. The Local Government Commission recommended maintaining available fund balance equal to at least 8% of expenditures. The report contained an unqualified opinion and the county was in compliance with all federal and state program requirements. The property tax collection was 97.73%, which was above the previous year.

Informational item only.

(8) HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:

Motion: *Commissioner Mau moved to reappoint Bill Crawford to serve another three year term on the Historic Preservation Commission, term to expire December 31, 2020. Commissioner Luker seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(9) PLANNING BOARD:

Motion: *Commissioner Luker moved to reappoint Steven Johannessen to serve a two year term on the Planning Board, term to expire December 31, 2019. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(10) SOLID WASTE ADVISORY BOARD:

Motion: *Chairman McMahan moved to reappoint Bill Sparks to another four year term on the Solid Waste Advisory Board, term to expire December 31, 2021. Commissioner Luker seconded the Motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.*

(11) PRESS CONFERENCE: None.

There being no further business, Commissioner Luker moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Elders seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman