

**Jackson County Board of Education  
Minutes of Special-Called Joint Work Session  
with the Jackson County Commissioners  
Sylva, North Carolina**

Southwestern Community College

January 31, 2023

6:00 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education met in joint session with the Jackson County Board of Commissioners at Southwestern Community College, Burrell Building, on Tuesday, January 31, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss School Operations.

The following Jackson County Board of Education members were present at this meeting:

Elizabeth Cooper, Chairperson  
Wes Jamison, Vice Chairperson  
Abigail Clayton  
Kim Moore  
Dr. Lynn Dillard

Also present were Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent; Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; Ashley Leonard, Board Attorney; Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer; and Cora Fields, Board Assistant.

Members of the Jackson County Board of Commissioners present were:

Mark Letson, Chairman  
Mark Jones  
Todd Bryson  
Tom Stribling  
John Smith

Also present were Don Adams, Jackson County Manager; Heather Baker, County Attorney; Darlene Fox, Finance Officer; and Angie Winchester, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper called the meeting to order on behalf of Jackson County Public Schools at 6:00 p.m.

Mrs. Cooper led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Mark Letson called the meeting to order on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.*

*Upon a motion and second by the Jackson County Commissioners, the JCBOC voted to unanimously approve the Agenda.*

### **WORK SESSION**

Mrs. Cooper turned the meeting over to Superintendent Dr. Dana L. Ayers. Dr. Ayers introduced the members of the Jackson County Public Schools Board of Education, Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper, Chairperson; Mr. Wes Jamison, Vice Chairperson; Mrs. Abigail Clayton; Mrs. Kim Moore; Dr. Lynn Dillard; Mr. Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; and Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer.

Dr. Ayers thanked the Commissioners for their time and the opportunity to meet jointly with the County. Dr. Ayers presented an overview of current capital and operations budget funding. Dr. Ayers provided an updated Capital Projects list as follows:

1. Cafeteria and Classrooms at Fairview Elementary School
2. Traditional Middle School
3. ADA Upgrades/Concession Stand at Smoky Mountain High School Stadium
4. Track on Jones Street Property
5. New Bus Garage on current site
6. Erosion Control at Scotts Creek Elementary School
7. Blue Ridge School Gym with Performance Space
8. Softball Field Upgrades at Webster Complex

Dr. Ayers said that no decision has been made to determine a location for a middle school. Options include building a new school or converting an existing school. She said that the BOE has determined that the Fairview cafeteria project is still the number one priority and have added the traditional middle school project as the number two priority to the capital project list.

Dr. Ayers shared additional information with the Commissioners that highlighted the benefits a traditional middle school would offer. The long-term benefits include but are not limited to advanced coursework, accessibility for students with disabilities or at-risk students, access to career and technical training options, access to visual, performing arts, and band, teacher collaboration, ease of student transitions, and staff training.

The board members fielded questions from the commissioners about the next steps and timeline for the Fairview project and discussed the delay in the funding of the track and softball field upgrade projects due to grant submissions.

Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper thanked the Jackson County Board of Commissioners for their time and the opportunity to meet jointly with their board.

Chairman Letson thanked the Jackson County Public Schools staff for their presentation which concluded at approximately 7:10 p.m.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is February 28, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., at Fairview Elementary School, 251 Big Orange Way, Sylva, North Carolina.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no objection, Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

There being no objection, Chairman Mark Letson adjourned the joint meeting at 7:14 p.m.

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Elizabeth Cooper, Chairperson

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Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Secretary