

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

Fairview Elementary School

February 08, 2024

6:00 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education met in joint session with the Jackson County Board of Commissioners at Fairview Elementary School, in the Media Center, on Thursday, February 08, 2024, 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

Also present were Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent; Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; and Cora Fields, Board Assistant.

Members of the Jackson County Board of Commissioners present were:

Mark Letson, Chairman  
Mark Jones  
Todd Bryson  
John Smith

The following member was present via telephone and/or online platform:

Mr. Tom Stribling

Also present were Darlene Fox, Interim Jackson County Manager; John Kubis, Interim County Attorney; 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. Abigail Clayton, 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 welcomed everyone to the meeting. She turned the meeting over to Superintendent Dr. Dana L. Ayers for introductions. 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; and Mrs. Kim Moore.

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, and 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 the need for a new cafeteria and additional classroom space was the highest priority due to constraints with capacity in both areas. The Fairview kitchen preparation and serving areas are very limited, in addition to accessibility issues for mobility compromised students and staff. 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. Dr. Ayers added that two items, #6 and #8 above on the priority list, could be removed depending on funding and completion of other capital projects. Dr. Ayers provided possibilities for vacated spaces at the elementary school when a middle school is built.

Dr. Ayers introduced Mr. Chad Roberson with ClarkNexsen Architectural. Mr. Roberson provided an overview of the JCPS facilities assessments that evaluated each school using the DPI site and building analysis tool. Utilization was done to compare the number of students per space profile. Mr. Roberson said that JCPS schools exhibited an average of 110% utilization, and that all structures are average to above average.

Results of the study:

1. Fairview is the most challenged with site constraints, ADA, cafeteria, and classroom configurations, with an immediate need for a new cafeteria, kitchen, and minimum of six classrooms.
2. Blue Ridge Kitchen/serving line should be addressed in the near future.
3. Bus Garage should be replaced on site.
4. Study possible sites for future middle school.
5. Develop plan for backfilling existing schools.
6. Address Smoky Mountain High School athletics.

Mr. Roberson provided a summary of possible options to address the SMHS Athletics complex that includes track and field, soccer, baseball and softball fields, and renovation of football stadium upgrades, press box facility.

The Board of Commissioners discussed options for the athletic fields based on the information presented by ClarkNexsen. The Board of Commissioners also asked for previous survey results.

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 7:30 p.m.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is February 27, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., at Sylva, North Carolina.**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no objection, Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

There being no objection, Chairman Mark Letson adjourned the joint meeting at 7:35 p.m.

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Elizabeth Cooper, Chairperson

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Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Secretary