

**Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 3, 2023**

Board members present: Cal Stiles, Chairman; Jan Griggs, Vice-Chair; Randy Phillips, member; and Ben Adams, member. Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, member was unable to attend.

Others present: Randy Wiggins, County Manager; Maria Hass, Asst. County Manager/Clerk to Board; Candy Anderson, Finance Director; and, Darryl Brown, County Attorney.

Time: 6:30 P.M.

Location: Cherokee County Courthouse, Room 342.

Call to Order

Invocation

Invocation given by Randy Wiggins.

Pledge of Allegiance

Reading of Ethics Statement by Clerk to the Board

Presentation of Agenda by Chairman

Modifications of Agenda

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Adams to add discussion of Mountain Folk Center property. Motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Adoption

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to adopt the agenda, as modified. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Forum

The following persons spoke in public forum concerning various issues and concerns: Judy Stines, John Leder, Rusty Albietz, Ron Wright, Blake James, Andy Ziemann, Dori Mitchen, Patty Callahan, and Tom Hall.

Public Hearing – Cherokee County Transit – FY2024 Public Transportation Grant Application

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to open the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer West, Transit Director, explained the purpose of the grant and the intended use of funds. There were no public comments.

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Phillips to close the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

Local Share Certification and Resolution for NCDOT 2024 Transit Grant

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve the local share certification and resolution. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing for Re-establishment of DSS Board

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to open the public hearing for comments. The following persons spoke during the comment period: Rusty Albietz, Bo Phillips, Judy Stines, and Ron Wright. There being no further comments, a Motion was made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to close the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

Establish New Social Services Board

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Phillips to approve a resolution establishing a new Social Services Board, and instructed the Clerk to advertise for the two county-appointed positions per state statute. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Phillips to approve the following board minutes, as presented: 11/28/2022; 12/5/2022 – Organizational Meeting; 12/5/2022 Regular Meeting; and 12/19/2022 Worksession. Motion passed unanimously.

Mountain Folk Center Property

Commissioner Griggs discussed Cherokee County Schools property stored and abandoned at the Mountain Folk Center. Commissioner Adams discussed the liability associated with the various items and personal property stored on the county property. John Higdon, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Facilities, was in attendance and said that he would contact the maintenance department and get the property cleaned up.

Budget and Finance

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve a budget revision for Cherokee County Schools for use of Article 46 sales tax for the following projects: SRO grant match (\$43,220); School of Innovation Fiber (\$51,041); ADA Activity Bus (\$101,205 – to be reimbursed by a grant); and a handicap lift for ADA activity bus (\$14,482). Commissioner Griggs added as part of the Motion, that the \$101,205 grant reimbursement be added back to the schools Article 46 sales tax fund. Superintendent Woody and Mr. Higdon agreed that the reimbursement would go back to the Article 46 fund. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Stiles suggested pre-approving \$50,000 from Article 46 sales tax for Cherokee County Schools to use for immediate or emergency school facilities maintenance needs. He said Cherokee County Schools could then report back to the board at the next available commission meeting to present a list of expenditures. Any invoices would be presented to the county finance office for payment from the designated funds. A Motion was made by Commissioner Phillips to

approve. Commissioner Adams seconded the Motion with the caveat that it would be on a 90-day trial basis. Commissioner Griggs said she would like to see the item tabled until the Mountain Folk Center issues are resolved and then bring this item back for discussion at a later date. There was no other discussion. Motion passed 3-1. Voting against the Motion was Commissioner Griggs.

Tax Releases, Tax Refunds, and NCVTS Report

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve all tax reports. Motion passed unanimously.

Co-Operative Extension Building Cost Estimate

Doug Clement, Extension Director, came before the Board to present a cost estimate for constructing a new Extension building at the county's Mark's Drive property. Mr. Clement discussed the needs of his department and extension programs, including the need for additional meeting space and additional parking. The cost estimate for construction is \$1,268,400. Water and sewer infrastructure cost is an additional \$400,000. Mr. Clement said the first step in the process is to have a preliminary design and construction plan. The cost estimate for preliminary design plans and construction documents is \$30,000. He said the plans would be necessary, prior to applying for any grants. Board members suggested looking at alternate sites owned by the county that might reduce the cost. After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Phillips to approve a budget revision for \$4,000 for the development of a preliminary plan. After further discussion, Commissioner Phillips withdrew his Motion. Motion made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to table the item. The Board instructed Mr. Clement to research alternate locations. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution for Legislative Support for a State Park in Cherokee County

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to approve a resolution requesting the North Carolina General Assembly introduce and ratify legislation establishing and funding a State Park in Cherokee County. Motion passed unanimously.

Master Plan and Trails Development for Hiwassee Dam Park

After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve a budget revision in the amount of \$24,380 to develop a master plan for a park and trail system in Hiwassee Dam. Motion passed unanimously.

Update to Board Rules of Procedure

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Adams to revise Rule #9 - Agenda - of the Boards Rules of Procedure. Motion passed unanimously.

Veterans Park Dedication with Congressman Chuck Edwards

Commissioner Griggs announced that Congressman Edwards would be attending the Konehete Veteran's Park dedication on January 17th at 3 PM. Commissioner Griggs said they will be honoring veteran, Oscar Valdes, for his part in getting the name of the park changed to honor Cherokee County veterans.

County Manager Items - None

Chairman/Commissioner Items

- Commissioner Phillips inquired as to whether the county could get larger Purple Heart signs. It was determined that the size is standard for Purple Heart signs.
- Commissioner Phillips made a Motion to re-allocate 2.5 million dollars for the high school consolidation project. Motion failed.
- Chairman Stiles said the county attorney is working on a draft noise ordinance and that the preliminary draft would be discussed and reviewed at the board's next meeting.
- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to move the January 17th meeting to January 23rd. Motion passed unanimously.
- Chairman Stiles, on behalf of the DSS board, thanked county maintenance and landfill employees for the great job they did at DSS.
- Commissioner Adams said he would like to set a worksession to discuss the airport, and to determine what the next steps are for moving the airport forward. It was decided that the issue would be an agenda item for the January 23rd meeting.

Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to adjourn.

Motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES APPROVED APRIL 3, 2023