

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2025

Board members present: Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, Chairman; Cal Stiles, Vice-Chairman; Ben Adams, member; Alan Bryant, member; and Mark Stiles, member.

Others present: Randy Wiggins, County Manager; Candy Anderson, Chief Financial Officer; Maria Hass, Assistant County Manager/Clerk to Board; and, Darryl Brown, County Attorney.

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Cherokee County Courthouse, Room 342.

Call to Order by Chairman Eichenbaum

Invocation

Pledge

Ethics Statement

The Clerk to the Board read the Ethics statement.

Modification of Agenda

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Chairman Eichenbaum to add Tax Releases and Tax Refunds to the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to remove “Increase to septic permit fees” under budget and finance. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to remove Cupit Road from the proposed road names for the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of Agenda

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

Public Hearing on Road Names

Motion made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to open the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

During the public hearing, Gail Hall and Tony Hall spoke in favor of Elaine’s Spring House Drive. Daniel Roberts and Lawrence Roberts spoke in opposition of Elaine’s Spring House Drive. There were no other comments received.

Motion made by Commissioner Mark Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Cal Stiles to close the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

Approve Road Names

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Mark Stiles to approve the following road names, as presented: Conleys Hill; Elaines Spring House Drive; Hiwassee Heights Way; Mindy Way; Possum Ridge Trail; Sunlit Ridge; The Garden Lane; and Whitetail Meadows Drive. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing on County Manager's FY 2026 Recommended Budget

Motion made by Commissioner Bryant and seconded by Commissioner Cal Stiles to open the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

No comments received.

Motion made by Commissioner Mark Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Cal Stiles to close the public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment Period

During public comment period, Ed Wood came before the board to request reimbursement in the amount of \$861.30 for fertilizer applied to a field at the airport that he was recently told he could no longer plant.

Budget and Finance

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to approve a budget revision for Cherokee County Schools use of Article 40/42 sales tax in the amount of \$14,548 for a HVAC coil replacement at Murphy High School, and window repairs at Hiwassee Dam and Andrews High School. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Mark Stiles to approve a budget revision for Cherokee County Schools use of Article 40/42 sales tax in the amount of \$15,000 for a feasibility study at the MHS highway property. Voting against the Motion was Commissioner Cal Stiles, Chairman Eichenbaum and Commissioner Bryant. Motion failed 2-3.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to redirect Annex elevator funds for the following: \$6,500 for Unaka Community Center repairs; \$15,300 to purchase a commercial mower for the Maintenance Department; and move remaining balance of \$103,200 into Fund Balance. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Mark Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve the Sheriff's request for use of federal forfeiture funds in the amount of \$7,500 to purchase and install license plate readers at three County line locations (Highway 60/Georgia, Topton/Macon, and Wolf Creek/Tennessee). Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Bryant and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve the Health Department fee schedules, as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Greg Huskins came before the board to request use of the old sale barn and Mountain Folk Center. Mr. Huskins proposed the reopening of the sale barn in Cherokee County for educational purposes, particularly to support agricultural programs and activities for youth. He outlined plans for monthly livestock sales, and said he has obtained the necessary permits. He discussed potential upgrades to the facility, including fire safety and structural improvements. Mr. Huskins emphasized the importance of preserving rural traditions and educating the youth in agriculture. He said Farm Bureau has pledged \$5,000 toward the project, and that he is seeking support from local organizations and looking for grant opportunities. Chairman Eichenbaum told Mr. Huskins that he needed to establish his 501c3 and the county attorney could then draft an agreement between the non-profit and the county for operation and use of the facility. After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Chairman Eichenbaum to designate \$40,000 toward the renovation and upgrade project, with the understanding that further inspections and assessments would determine the exact costs.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Cal Stiles to appoint Crystal Rumpf to the Southwestern Child Development Commission. Motion passed unanimously.

The county manager shared Judge Tessa Sellers request for designated office space in the courthouse.

Motion made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve the use of Cherokee County Transit fleet and personnel for the 2025 Juneteenth Event on June 14th. Motion passed unanimously.

Michael Starks, Assistant Chief of Hiwassee Dam Fire Department, came before the board to request a fire tax increase from 6.4 cents to 9.5 cents for FY 2026.

Chairman Steve Forrister and Chief Kasey Carter, of Culberson Fire Department, came before the board to request for fire tax increase from 5.4 cents to 9 cents for FY 2026.

Brad Bailey, Assistant Chief of Peachtree Fire Department, came before the board to request use of rescue funds in the amount of \$4,050 to purchase winches. Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Mark Stiles to approve the request. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to approve the sale of K-9 Arlo for \$1,500. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to approve a resolution exempting the landfill mechanic building project from design services and to approve the Architecture Unlimited Letter Agreement for Design Services. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Adams to declare 59 Hiwassee Street surplus property and to advertise the property through electronic auction and in the Cherokee Scout newspaper, with a minimum reserve of \$485,000. Motion passed

unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to approve the 2026 State Holiday Schedule. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to approve the FY 26 Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Certification (JCPC) and JCPC Annual Plan. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Bryant and seconded by Commissioner Cal Stiles to approve the Tax Releases, Tax Refund Report and NCVTS Refund Report, as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to go into closed session, pursuant to §143-318.11 (a) (3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. Motion passed unanimously.

During closed session, the board met with insurance counsel, Sean Perrin, regarding the Kloepper & Mahler v. Sheriff Dustin Smith, et al case. Mr. Perrin informed the board that the county insurance carrier and the tribe had agreed to a settlement of \$10 million, \$5 million paid by the tribe and \$5 million from the county's insurance. Mr. Perrin said the county paid its \$5,000 deductible when the case was filed, and since the settlement does not involve the expenditure of county funds, the Board of Commissioners is not required to approve the settlement. He said the settlement would be reported to the U.S. District Court within 45 days, and the settlement will most likely be made public tomorrow.

Open Session

After returning to open session, there was no additional discussion or action.

Adjourn

Motion made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

**THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ON JUNE 16, 2025.**