

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
June 28, 2021  
6:30 p.m.  
Cherokee County Courthouse

**Members present:** Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, Chairman; Jan Griggs, Vice-Chairman; Cal Stiles, member; Randy Phillips, member; and Gary Westmoreland, member.

**Staff present:** Randy Wiggins, County Manager; Maria Hass, Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board; Candy Anderson, Finance Director; and, Darryl Brown, County Attorney.

**Also present:** WKRC Radio, Local TV4 and Cherokee Scout.

**Call to order and ethics statement by Chairman.**

**Invocation and Pledge**

**Modification of Agenda**

Motion made by Commissioner Stiles to add a resolution to increase the micro-purchase threshold. Motion seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Motion passed unanimously.

**Agenda Adoption**

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

**Public Hearing on Proposed Road Names** (Roberts Ridge Lane, Neutron Drive, Linda Lane, Chanterelle Cove, Quiet Woods Trail, Paradise Park Road, Paradise Woods Lane, and Arbor Way)

Motion made by Commissioner Westmoreland to open the floor to public comments. Motion seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Motion passed unanimously.

There were no public comments on the proposed road names.

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

**Adopt Road Names**

Motion made by Commissioner Westmoreland to adopt the following road names: Roberts Ridge Lane; Neutron Drive; Linda Lane; Chantrelle Cove; Quiet Woods Trail; Paradise Park Road; Paradise Woods Lane; and Arbor Way. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stiles. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Public Forum**

Ms. Kim Dossett spoke to the Board about a recent dog attack, in which she was the victim.

Mr. Elliott Southworth spoke to the Board saying he was opposed to the Bill of Rights sanctuary resolution to be considered at this evening's meeting. He also opposed the Board funding school consolidation.

## **Finance and Budget**

- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to approve the year-end budget revision. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Westmoreland to adopt the FY22 Budget Ordinance. Motion seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Voting in favor of the Motion was Commissioners Westmoreland, Phillips, and Eichenbaum. Voting against the Motion was Commissioners Griggs and Stiles. Motion passed 3-2. Commissioner Griggs and Commissioner Stiles read personal statements, saying they agreed with the updated county pay plan, but not the millage rate increase or the additional funding for the schools. Commissioner Griggs' statement is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment A.
- Motion made by Commissioner Griggs to approve the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Ordinance. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stiles. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to approve a resolution authorizing an increase in the micro-purchase threshold. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.

Budget revisions are available for inspection in the office of the County Finance Officer.

## **New Business**

- Andy Russell, NCDOT District Engineer, came before the Board to give a brief overview of a safety improvement project at the intersection of US 19-64-74-129 and Old Ranger Road, also known as State Road 1398. Mr. Russell said the project is due to an increase in vehicle collisions west of Murphy. He shared crash analysis data that shows 16 reported crashes between the dates of December 1, 2015 and January 2021; one fatality, two Class A injuries, and seven Class B injuries. Mr. Russell shared that the project would involve restricting median opening, constructing a left turn lane and a U-turn bulbout east of the intersection. Board members asked Mr. Russell about the status of other current DOT projects and potential future projects.
- Shelly Foreman, Human Relations Director of VAYA Health, along with Youth Villages Regional Director, George Edmonds and DSS Director, Amanda McGee, came before the Board to present the Cherokee County One Home pilot program. The One Home pilot program is a program aimed at keeping children in the DSS system in their home communities, and providing services and support to foster families.

- After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Stiles to approve a Program Integrity/Fraud Plan policy and procedures for the Department of Social Services. Motion seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to adopt a seatbelt addendum to the Cherokee County Transit passenger rules. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to approve the tax releases and refunds, as submitted. Motion seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to appoint Commissioner Westmoreland as the 2021 NCACC Voting Delegate for Cherokee County. Motion seconded by Commissioner Eichenbaum. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Griggs to appoint Brian Dillon as Cherokee County Watershed Administrator. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stiles. Motion passed unanimously.
- Chairman Eichenbaum read a resolution that he authored, titled "A Resolution Declaring Cherokee County, North Carolina, a Bill of Rights Sanctuary County". After discussion, a Motion was made by Chairman Eichenbaum to adopt the resolution, as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Voting in favor of the Motion was Commissioners Eichenbaum, Westmoreland and Phillips. Voting against the Motion was Commissioners Stiles and Griggs. Motion passed 3-2.

### **Commissioner Items**

Chairman Eichenbaum made several comments concerning the adopted budget and millage rate increase. Some of the comments made were related to the importance of funding essential public safety services, the importance of updating the county pay plan to ensure the County is competitive and can recruit and retain personnel, and the importance of funding educational services and facilities. He said the tax rate has not increased in 13 years and a 4 cent increase is a burden the county has to accept to be able to provide services to the people of Cherokee County. Commissioner Stiles rebutted, saying that he felt like the Board could fund services without a tax increase. He questioned the 4 cent increase, asking if it is for the schools or for county services. Chairman Eichenbaum said increasing the tax rate by 4 cent provides a cushion for fund balance. He said that the 4 cent does not have to be designated at this time. Commissioner Griggs shared her concerns that the 4 cent increase will be used for the consolidated high school, as stated at a previous meeting, and she said that is why she could not approve the budget.

### **Closed Session**

Motion made by Commissioner Westmoreland to go into closed session to consult with legal counsel and to discuss a personnel matter within the tax office. Motion seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Motion passed unanimously.

During closed session, the board discussed the pending insurance pool lawsuit, and a personnel matter, involving a tax office employee.

## **Open Session**

After returning to open session, no action was taken on matters discussed in closed session.

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, a Motion was made by Commissioner Stiles to adjourn. Motion seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Motion passed unanimously.

THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ON OCTOBER 4, 2021.