

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
September 7, 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; 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 Phillips to remove items "a", "d", and "I" under New Business. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to move item "e" under New Business to Closed Session. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Commissioners Stiles and Griggs voted against the Motion. Motion passed 3-2.

Agenda Adoption

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to adopt the agenda, as modified. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Commissioner Griggs voted against the Motion. Motion passed 4-1.

Public Forum

Finance and Budget

- Motion made by Commissioner Stiles to approve a budget revision to receive VAYA health funds for family home stabilization needs. Motion seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to approve a budget revision for use of sheriff's designated fund balance to replace surveillance equipment. Motion seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Motion passed unanimously.

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

New Business

- Motion made by Commissioner Westmoreland to table a health insurance gap resolution presented by Casey Cooper of EBCI. Motion seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Griggs to approve the use of rescue funds to match a rescue grant for Hiwassee Dam VFD. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stiles. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Griggs to approve the tax releases, tax refunds, and NCVTS report, with the exception of the last four listed aircraft on the release report, which will be presented at a later date. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stiles. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to approve the selection of W.K. Dickson as the airport's consulting firm for the next five years. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.
- Chairman Eichenbaum presented a resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation construct an eastbound merge lane at the intersection of N.C. Highway 60 and U.S. Highway 64/74. Motion made by Commissioner Eichenbaum to approve. Motion seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to approve a joint resolution for the transfer of certain water/sewer properties and the Murphy pocket parks to the Town of Murphy. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to approve continuing with the original plan for placing the main airport gate at the entrance of airport access road and approving a resolution requesting North Carolina Department of Transportation abandon the access road and transfer ownership back to Cherokee County. Motion seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland. Commissioner Griggs shared concerns of the county not knowing who is in the hangars for tax listing purposes. She said she would like to table the project until the county can determine who is in the hangars. Commissioner Stiles said he is opposed to using tax dollars to secure storage units on private property, and he proposed placing the fence and gate closer to the county's hangars and only on county-owned property. Gayland Trull, as the FBO, spoke in favor of the original plan to place the gate at the main entrance, which involves county-owned property, DOT property and Wood Family Farms property. Commissioners Eichenbaum, Westmoreland, and Phillips spoke in favor of moving forward with the original placement. Commissioners Griggs and Stiles voted against the Motion. Motion passed 3-2.

Commissioner Items

Commissioner Griggs asked if the county had provided a response back to NCDOT Division of Aviation concerning the residential through the fence agreement. The Assistant county manager said that the county had provided a response, and that while the county has not received a final determination, it appears that the agreement is allowable, due to the exchange of property for the automated weather observation station.

Commissioner Griggs said she wanted to clarify some things that had been shared via social media, and shared with the county manager, as it related to the recent truck show at the airport.

She read a statement and shared her concerns about the approval process outside of a board meeting for the non-aviation related event.

Closed Session

Motion made by Commissioner Phillips to go into closed session, pursuant to §143-318.11 (a) (3) and (6) to consult with legal counsel, and to discuss a personnel matter. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stiles. Motion passed unanimously.

The following items were discussed during closed session: 1) issues with airport hangar leases; 2) personnel matters related to a tax office employee; and 3) update from legal counsel concerning CVA lawsuits, and consultation with separate counsel concerning the insurance pool's lawsuit against the county.

Concerning the personnel matter, the Board instructed the county manager to investigate complaints and to report his findings back to the Board.

Open Session

After returning to open session, the Board discussed incentive pay for EMS employees. Motion made by Commissioner Phillips and seconded by Commissioner Westmoreland to approve a Premium Pay Policy for EMS employees as follows:

- High hazard pay for full-time employees: A one-time bonus of \$2,000
- High hazard pay for part-time employees who have worked fifteen 24 hour shifts over the past 18 months: A one-time bonus of \$2,000
- Incentive pay for 24 hour shifts: \$250 per 24 hour shift
- Incentive pay for 12 hour shifts: \$125 per 12 hour shift

\$2,000 bonuses retroactive to last pay period, and \$250 incentive pay effective current pay period. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

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

THESE MINUTES WERE APROVED AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ON JANUARY 3, 2022.