

**Cherokee County Board of Commissioners**  
**Special Called Meeting Minutes**  
**March 4, 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**

**The Clerk to the Board read the Ethics Statement**

**Budget and Finance**

- Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to approve a budget revision for grant funds from University of Georgia in the amount of \$5,000 and use of contingency in the amount of \$1,284 for a digital sign for the landfill. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Mark Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Cal Stiles to approve a budget revision in the amount of \$64,778 for an Emergency Shelter Grant. Motion passed unanimously. *Note: This project was approved on 5/6/2024, but no budget revision was presented. There is no county match.*
- Motion made by Commissioner Ben Adams and seconded by Commissioner Bryant to approve a budget revision in the amount of \$131,250 to accept a NC Department of Public Safety Grant for the Emergency Operations Center. Motion passed unanimously. *Note: Project was previously approved and county match of \$43,750 was previously budgeted.*

**New Business**

- Concerning the Cherokee County Board of Education's recently proposed 6-12 high school consolidation plan, Board members once again shared their thoughts and concerns. Chairman Eichenbaum said it is the Board of Education's responsibility to provide a "first rate" education for every child in the county. He said he opposes the plan presented by the Board of Education to place 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders on a high school

campus, and has put together a resolution that includes what the Board of Commissioners is willing to support and fund. He said students need to graduate from high school with a vocational trade, so they may be able to stay here after high school. He said the resolution doesn't require the Board of Education to do anything, but it provides what the Board of Commissioners is willing to do. Chairman Eichenbaum then asked the Clerk to the Board to read the following resolution:

*WHEREAS, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners on February 17, 2025 rejected a proposed plan submitted by the Cherokee County Board of Education for a Grade 6-12 school located adjacent to the Cherokee County Schools of Innovation campus near Tri-County Community College.*

*WHEREAS, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to support efforts to establish a new Murphy High School facility for grades 9-12 located adjacent to the Schools of Innovation on the campus of Tri-County Community College that would include a cafeteria and gymnasium. Such high school would have open enrollment for all Cherokee County Students.*

*WHEREAS, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners is mindful of the role of the Cherokee County Board of Education and its authority to consolidate schools.*

*WHEREAS, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners wishes to state unequivocally that it does not support the building of a facility that could be used as a consolidated county high school.*

*WHEREAS, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners is mindful of its obligation to the Cherokee County to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.*

*WHEREAS, a clarification of the parameters of the Board of Commissioners' support for the project is necessary and proper before prospective grant applications are submitted by the Cherokee County Board of Education.*

*WHEREFORE, be it resolved by the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners as follows:*

- 1. The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners supports an addition to the Cherokee County Schools of Innovation to create a new Murphy High School utilizing and incorporating the existing Schools of Innovation for that purpose.*
- 2. The new addition and the existing facility shall house Murphy High School, Tri-County Early College, and Oaks Academy.*
- 3. The existing facility and addition shall provide for space for no more than 800 students but shall include classrooms, a gymnasium, and a cafeteria.*
- 4. The new school facility shall have open enrollment for all Cherokee County students.*
- 5. Students at the new facility shall be allowed to take classes at Tri-County Community College with credit toward dual graduation requirements.*
- 6. Instructors from Tri-County Community College shall be allowed to provide instruction to Cherokee County students at the Cherokee County School facility.*
- 7. The budget for the addition to the School of Innovation shall be limited to the amount of the Department of Public Instruction grant and no more than \$62 million. The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners would not support further spending beyond the grant match by appropriation or incurring debt.*

8. *Grant applications to the Department of Public Instruction, or any other funding source, for the construction of new facilities and/or renovation must be approved by the Board of County Commissioners.*
9. *That the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners shall approve architect and engineer selection for the project*
10. *The Board of Commissioners shall approve plans for the project, including bid alternates.*

*The Clerk to the Board is instructed to convey this resolution to the Cherokee County Board of Education and CCS Administration.*

After the resolution was read, a Motion was made by Chairman Eichenbaum and seconded by Commissioner Cal Stiles to adopt the resolution supporting local match funding in the amount of \$5,000,000 for a new Murphy High School, as presented in the above resolution. Voting in favor of the Motion was Chairman Eichenbaum, Commissioner Cal Stiles and Commissioner Alan Bryant. Voting against the Motion was Commissioner Mark Stiles and Commissioner Ben Adams. Motion passed 3-2.

- The County Manager presented the Board with the proposed FY 2026 budget calendar and asked board members to review the dates and be prepared at the next meeting to set a budget schedule.
- After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Cal Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Alan Bryant to decline a request from the Town of Murphy to Cherokee County for donation of the armory at no-cost. Voting in favor of declining the request was Chairman Eichenbaum and Commissioner Cal Stiles and Commissioner Alan Bryant. Voting against declining the request was Commissioner Mark Stiles and Commissioner Ben Adams. Motion passed 3-2.

### **Animal Control Discussion**

During the animal control discussion, Sheriff Dustin Smith and Captain David Williams said the Sheriff's Office needs somewhere to take seized and nuisance animals. Captain Williams said the current animal control ordinance needs to be revised to defines things such as adequate shelter and nuisance animals. Sheriff Smith said he has two animal control vehicles, but needs trained and equipped staff. He said he regularly loses employees. He said he also needs chip readers and would like to use non-sworn officers as animal control officers. He said animal control officers need to be trained in neglected animals, and have continuing education.

Public Health Director, David Badger, Health Director, shared concerns that there is no place to take quarantined animals. He said there has been a big increase in animal bites over the last few years. He said the most important things to address animal control from a public health standpoint are: 1) an ordinance with specificity; 2) sheltering capacity; and 3) commitment to funding a program; and 4) appropriately trained staff in sheriff's department.

Board members shared concerns that Valley River Humane Society is not accepting the county's animals, although the county continues to fund the organization.

Commissioner Cal Stiles suggested the county's attorney and Sheriff's attorney work together to come up with some ordinance parameters that the departments can work within.

**Adjourn**

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Chairman Eichenbaum to adjourn.

Motion passed unanimously.

**THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED BY THE CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ON APRIL 21, 2025.**