

**Cherokee County Board of Commissioners**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 7, 2024**

**Board members present:** Randy Phillips, Chairman; Dr. Dan Eichenbaum, Vice-Chairman; Cal Stiles, member; Jan Griggs, member; Ben Adams, member.

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

**Time:** 6:30 P.M.

**Location:** Cherokee County Courthouse, Room 342.

**Call to Order by Chairman Phillips**

**Invocation**

**Pledge**

**Ethics Statement** “Members of the County Board of Commissioners are advised, hereby, of their duty under the Local Government Ethics Act and should avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of such conflict; and, further, are instructed to refrain from participating in any matter coming before this Board of County Commissioners with respect to which there is a conflict of interest or appearance of such conflict as may be allowed by law”.

**Public Comment Period**

**Commissioner Comment Period**

- Commissioner Eichenbaum talked about the importance of education and proposed a joint work session with the Cherokee County Board of Education to discuss the Board of Education’s current facilities plan, and to allow for public comment at the beginning of the joint work session. Motion made by Commissioner Eichenbaum and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to schedule a joint work session with the Board of Education, and to allow for public comment at the beginning of the joint work session. Commissioner Stiles said he is ok with the meeting, but not ok with going down the route of consolidation. Commissioner Eichenbaum said this would be to discuss the current plans that are on the table. Motion passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Griggs commented on the following meetings/events:
  - Peachtree Broadband meeting recently held at Hiwassee Dam Volunteer Fire Dept.
  - Bellview VFD ribbon cutting held on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. She also shared a certificate of recognition to the County for the donation of the land for the new fire station.
  - Recent meeting to discuss a Youth Center.
  - Murphy Police Dept is having a flag raising on March 14<sup>th</sup> at their new station.
  - Mountain Lakes Board of Realtors received a grant for \$7,499 for the community garden at Hiwassee Dam Fire Dept.
  - Commissioners received an email this week announcing a grant for ADA upgrades to the Rock Gym thanks to Senator Corbin. The grant award is \$170,000.
  - Congratulated Hiwassee Dam VFD on its recent reduction in ISO rating from a 5 to a 4.

- Discussed the March 19<sup>th</sup> animal control work session. Commissioner Griggs said since one of the key persons cannot attend the March 19<sup>th</sup> work session that she would like to reschedule it. She suggested keeping the March 19<sup>th</sup> work session to discuss EMS Station 2 and other priority projects.
- Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Adams to use the March 19<sup>th</sup> work session to discuss EMS Station 2 and other priority projects. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Adams to schedule a work session on April 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. to discuss animal control, and to schedule a work session on April 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. to discuss a high-impact ordinance. Motion passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Adams discussed the following:
  - Complaints related to convenience site hours.
  - Asked county manager to confirm that DSS trailer is being used. He said he has been told that it is not being utilized.
  - Announced his personal town hall meeting, scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup>.
  - Read a vision and leadership statement. Statement attached to these minutes.
  - Said he would like the Board to have a shared vision and set goals for the county.
- Chairman Phillips commented on the recent election results and said that he is not going to sit idle for the next eight months, that he will continue working for the county through the end of his term. He said he appreciated the support he has received over these last few years and said he has made many friends during that time.
- Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Adams to add discussion of a strategic plan to the March 19<sup>th</sup> work session. Motion passed unanimously.

### **County Manager Items**

The county manager congratulated Commissioner Adams on completing the Advanced Leadership Course at the School of Government and said he appreciated Ben taking the time to go through the program.

### **Modification of Agenda**

Motion made by Commissioner Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to add an Audit Contract Amendment to the agenda as item “f” under Budget and Finance. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Stiles to add a transportation agreement as item “d2” under New Business. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Adoption of Agenda**

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

### **Budget and Finance**

Motion made by Commissioner Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve a budget revision in the amount of \$9,962 for use of insurance proceeds from a totaled patrol car to uplift a 2023 Dodge Durango patrol vehicle. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to approve a budget revision in the amount of \$17,900 for Cherokee County Schools request to use Article 40/42 sales tax to replace shower tile at Andrews High School. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to approve a budget

revision in the amount of \$300,000 for a Dogwood Health Trust Grant for Community Paramedicine Program planning. Motion passed unanimously.

Note: There is no county match. \$100,000 will be used to assist with developing a plan for a community paramedicine program and \$200,000 will be used for EMS recruitment and training of personnel.

**AMENDED TO CLARIFY PURPOSE OF APPROVED FUNDS:** Motion made by Commissioner Griggs to approve a request from Peachtree Volunteer Fire Department for Rescue Funds in the amount of \$31,432.05 to purchase rescue equipment. After discussion, Commissioner Griggs amended her Motion to approve a budget revision in the amount of \$20,000 for the purchase of the three major rescue items; airbag kits, rescue hammer and concrete saw. Motion seconded by Commissioner Eichenbaum. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Eichenbaum to approve an electronic bill payment software for the Tax Collection office in the amount of \$2,640, contingent upon the software being vetted through Cherokee County Information Technology department. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve the FY 2022 amended audit contract. The amendment is a date change only, requested by the audit firm, with a date to the Local Government Commission now being April 2024. Motion passed unanimously.

### **New Business**

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to appoint Karissa Van Ostrand to the Cherokee County Needs and Solutions Advisory Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Stiles to appoint Sandra Daley to the Cherokee County Board of Equalization and Review. Motion passed unanimously.

After discussion and presentation by Airport Manager Chris Williams and Veteran Services Officer Danna Pash, a Motion was made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Adams to approve the date of October 12<sup>th</sup> for the 2024 Welcome Home Veterans Event at Western Carolina Regional Airport, contingent upon the Welcome Home Event committee providing proof of special event insurance. Motion passed unanimously. The event is aviation-related and does not require FAA approval.

Jennifer West, Cherokee County Transit Director, came before the Board to present a transportation agreement for Valley View Care and Rehabilitation. The agreement would be for the remainder of this fiscal year and would provide transportation for clients of Valley View to their respective destinations. After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to approve the agreement, as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer West, Cherokee County Transit Director, came before the Board to present a transportation agreement for Murphy Rehabilitation, Inc. The agreement would be for the remainder of this fiscal year and would provide transportation for clients of Murphy Rehabilitation, Inc. After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to approve the agreement, as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to table discussion of the proposed Voluntary Agriculture District Ordinance. Commissioner Adams said he had some questions he would like to ask before moving forward. Motion passed unanimously.

Sheriff Smith and Captain David Williams came before the Board to present a proclamation recognizing first responders. Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Eichenbaum to recognize March 25 - March 29, 2024 as First Responder Wellness Week in Cherokee County and to approve the proclamation, as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

After discussion, a Motion was made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Eichenbaum to approve an interlocal agreement between Cherokee County and Cherokee County Schools for Cherokee County Schools use of a 60' x 60' space for the purpose of a community garden, and for a term of 24 months. The approval is contingent upon Cherokee County Schools insurance coverage for the project. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Phillips to appoint Commissioner Adams to the Southwestern NC Home Consortium Board of Directors until December 2024. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Chairman Phillips to approve the Cherokee County Information Technology Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) Policy. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Commissioner Stiles and seconded by Commissioner Eichenbaum to waive a tax penalty in the amount of \$159.96 for The Learning Center property. Motion passed unanimously.

Note: The penalties accrued during the mandatory waiting period for objections to the sale and disbursement process.

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to approve the tax releases, tax refunds and NCVTS reports, as submitted. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Closed Session**

Motion made by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Commissioner Griggs to go into closed session, pursuant to §143-318.11 (1) to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential. Motion passed unanimously.

During closed session, the Board discussed the Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) grant, as it relates to a potential provider. The matter was discussed in closed session to protect the identity and protected financial information of the potential provider.

#### **Open Session**

After returning to open session, no action was taken.

#### **Adjournment**

Motion made by Commissioner Griggs and seconded by Commissioner Adams to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

**THESE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ON JUNE 24, 2024.**