

# Ashe County

150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640



## Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, December 1, 2025

9:00 AM

Commission Meeting Room

### County Commission

*Chairperson Todd McNeill  
Vice Chair Jerry D. Powers  
Commissioner Russell Killen  
Commissioner Wes Greene  
Commissioner Mike Eldreth*

**BUSINESS SESSION****I. 9:00 AM - Meeting Called to Order at the Ashe County Courthouse**

**Present:** 5 - Chairperson Todd McNeill, Vice Chairman Jerry D. Powers, Commissioner Mike Eldreth, Commissioner Russell Killen and Commissioner Wes Greene

**II. Election of Chairman & Vice Chairman**

*County Manager Adam Stumb took over as Chair for the Organizational portion of the December 1st, 2025 meeting for the election of the Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to elect Commissioner Todd McNeill as Chair of the Ashe County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

*Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to elect Commissioner Jerry Powers as Vice Chair of the Ashe County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

**For:** 5 - Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**III. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer**

*Commissioner Greene led the Pledge of Allegiance and Vice Chairman Powers offered the opening Prayer.*

**IV. Consent Agenda**

*Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

**For:** 5 - Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**A.**     [MIN 25-31](#)     November 3rd, 2025 Regular Session Minutes

**Attachments:**   [12-1-2025 November 3rd, 2025 Regular Session Minutes](#)

**B.**     [MIN 25-32](#)     November 17th, 2025 Work Session Minutes

**Attachments:**   [12-1-2025 November 17th, 2025 Work Session Minutes](#)

**C.**     [MISC 25-36](#)     Monthly Tax Report - October 2025

**Attachments:**   [12-1-2025 Monthly Tax Report- October 2025](#)

**D.**     [APP 25-18](#)     Airport Advisory Board Re-Appointment of Wes Phillips (Expires 12/2025)

**E.**     [APP 25-19](#)     Appointment of Jury Commissioner - Angie Eggers

Attachments: [12-1-2025 Jury Commissioner](#)

**RES 25-9**

Resolutions Awarding Badge and Servicearm to Retiring Sergeant  
Brandon Shatley & Chief Deputy Danny Houck

Attachments: [12-1-2025 Res Awarding Badge & Sidearm \(Shatley and Houck\)](#)

**V. Adoption of Agenda**

*Commissioner Greene made the motion to adopt the December 1, 2025 agenda.  
Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*  
**Adopted**

**For:** 5 - Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**VI. Public Comment**

*Chairman McNeill opened the floor for the Public Comment portion of today's meeting at 9:03 am.*

*Charles Stafford, Fleetwod took the podium and spoke on the Ashe County High School Women's Tennis Team. He stated that the team finished sixth out of 52 schools in their 1A to 4A classification in North Carolina.*

*Coach Amy Dollar was named Coach of the Year in her conference. Amy Dollar's daughter, the team's number one seed, finished fourth out of 312 competitors. Charles then spoke on Solar Energy with a reference made to a previous commission meeting and a statement that "solar does not produce energy." Charles countered, noting North Carolina is ranked fifth in the U.S. for solar energy production. The state supports over 7,400 jobs in the solar industry. Solar generation in North Carolina is sufficient for the energy needs of 1.2 million homes.*

*Blue Ridge Electric, a local provider, has a community solar program that generated over 10 megawatts of energy in November, reducing reliance on Duke Energy. Charles stated that the importance of renewable energy is linked to climate change, referencing the costly and underfunded recovery from Hurricane Helene in 2024. He emphasized that advancements in solar and nuclear technology, like ThorCon, are crucial for mitigating climate impacts.*

*Leslie Sparks from AgSouth Farm Credit Board, along with other members, introduced herself and explained the purpose of the Farm Credit system, that it was established to support agricultural and rural communities.*

*Vicki Young, local loan officer in Jefferson, introduced her team: Anita Evans, Angie Douglas, and Doug Price.*

*Leslie described the Growing Communities grant program, which provides up to \$5,000 to nonprofits in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. She stated that this year, the Ashe County Agricultural Campus and Livestock Center was awarded one of these grants, out of over 200 applicants. Leslie along with the AgSouth Farm Credit Board presented a check to Commissioners for the Ashe County Agricultural Campus and Livestock Center. The group coordinated to take a photo together to commemorate the grant presentation.*

*Seeing no further movement from the citizens in attendance Chairman McNeill closed the Public Comment portion of today's meeting at 9:09 am.*



## VII. Presentations

A. [PRES](#) 9:04 AM - Jim Parsons & Michael Barr - Hope Through A Vision  
[25-158](#)

**Attachments:** [12-1-2025 Hope Through a Vision Info Packet](#)

Michael Barr (founder/president) and Jim Parsons (CEO) presented, seeking county support for the homeless shelter initiative in Ashe County. Mr. Barr stated that the initiative is currently funded by church donations, fundraisers, and limited grants. Over the past five years, 171 individuals have been helped, with nearly \$76,000 spent, but many more could have been assisted with additional funds. The majority of people helped are from Ashe County, including families and individuals who have lost homes due to emergencies or rising housing costs. Motel rooms are used as emergency accommodations but are costly even at discounted rates (\$70/night). The organization operates with only five volunteers and regularly receives referrals from DSS, law enforcement, churches, and the local community. The core request is for county support, specifically in the form of land (possibly county-owned) to build a dedicated shelter, or assistance in funding construction.

Proposed facility would house 12 people at a time, offering individual rooms with kitchen and laundry access for privacy and security. The building "shell" price quote presented does not include foundation, insulation, wiring, plumbing, or furniture. Aim is to secure city water/sewer connections to avoid on-site septic, which would require working with municipal authorities and adhering to local zoning/utility regulations. He stated that ongoing challenges include the need for a sustainable operational and maintenance funding plan. No cash is given directly to clients; instead, needs like food are addressed through direct assistance (e.g., shopping trips). Occasional clients may try to abuse the system, but relationships with local motel owners help prevent this. Pet accommodation is now possible at the preferred, lower-cost motel. Community support and fundraising are currently insufficient to meet needs; public/governmental involvement is seen as crucial for expanding capacity and sustainability. Commissioners suggested that they begin discussions with municipal partners about water, sewer, and zoning requirements for a shelter facility. Develop a detailed operations and maintenance plan for the proposed shelter. Explore additional funding sources (public and private) to support shelter construction and ongoing operations. Increase public awareness and advocacy for the shelter initiative within Ashe County.

B. [PRES](#) 9:09 AM - Andrew Cox, Soil & Water District Director - New Grant Position  
[25-159](#)

Andrew Cox from New River Soil and Water discussed a grant received for a temporary three-year position related to soil and water work, funded due to Hurricane Helene recovery efforts. The grant totals \$200,000, fully paid by the state, covering salary and benefits for the new position. The county's only responsibility is to route the funds through Sandy and manage the employee's benefits package. The new hire will work on debris removal, continued cleanup efforts, and assist with programs like EWP through the USDA, as well as cost-sharing initiatives for livestock and crop farms. The funding is split: \$100,000 is already en route for the first year, with the remaining \$100,000 to follow, to be spread over three years. The position is shared between Ashe and Alleghany counties, with most work in Ashe; Alleghany would receive assistance as needed (roughly one day a week or less). No specific individual has been selected; interest has been expressed, but official advertisement and hiring await board approval. The board discussed and expressed support for the funding request, with a motion made by Vice Chairman Powers and seconded by Commissioner Killen to proceed with unanimous

board approval.  
**Approved**

**For:** 5 - Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**C.**     [PRES](#)  
          [25-160](#)

9:14 AM - Kelsey Wagoner, Human Resources Coordinator - Animal Shelter Attendants Hourly Pay Discussion

**Attachments:** [12-1-2025 Documents-Part Time Animal Shelter Attendant](#)

*Adam Stumb, County Manager, Kelsey and Joe Testerman, Director of Ashe County Animal Control discussed ongoing challenges in filling a part-time position at the animal shelter, mainly for cleaning and regular duties.*

*The position has required multiple rounds of re-advertising due to lack of applicants, largely because it involves less desirable hours like weekends and holidays. The role is seen as an important support for existing staff, particularly providing relief for Crystal during weekends and busy times. To make the position more appealing and retain staff longer-term, a proposal was brought up to raise the hourly wage from \$12.75 to \$14 per hour.*

*The increase would represent an additional \$1,300 annually. The average weekly hours for the position are approximately 20. The proposed hourly rate increase received verbal support from several participants.*

*A motion was made by Commissioner Eldreth and seconded by Commissioner Greene with unanimous board approval to approve the pay increase.*

**Approved**

**For:** 5 - Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**D.**     [PRES](#)  
          [25-161](#)

9:20 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Warrensville Community Center Property

**Attachments:** [12-1-2025 Warrensville Community Center Property](#)

*Adam presented a letter sent by Dr. Eisa Cox regarding school board property at the Warrensville Community Center. The property is no longer being used for educational purposes. As per protocol, unused school board property must be offered first to the Board of County Commissioners. The county board must decide if they wish to purchase or otherwise take on the property, or pass on it. If the county passes, the Board of Education can proceed with other options for disposal of the property. The discussed no immediate county need for the property. The county expects to take over the middle school property soon, which may serve as an election precinct, replacing the current use of the Warrensville property. Part of the property is in a floodplain, which limits potential development or building on the site. A motion was made by Vice Chairman Powers and seconded by Commissioner Greene to relinquish the county's option on the property back to the Board of Education. Motion carried with no opposition noted.*

**Approved**

**For:** 5 - Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

[PRES](#)  
[25-162](#)

9:30 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Construction Firm Recommendation, Phase-1 Animal Shelter



**Attachments:** [12-1-2025 Statement of Qualifications - WithersRavenel](#)

Adam shared updates regarding a property option in West Jefferson being considered for a future animal shelter. The conversation around this property has become more public recently. The immediate next step is to engage an engineering firm for due diligence and to assist with the special use permit process from the Town of West Jefferson. The permit application will require a basic site plan showing proposed building, parking, and kennel locations. Once the permit is approved, the process will move to soil testing and assessing utility access (water/sewer). Adam stated that WithersRavenel is recommended as the engineering firm based on their previous successful collaborations, particularly with the industrial park project. The firm's experience with grant and funding procurement was highlighted, including securing Golden LEAF funds for past projects. WithersRavenel is the only firm considered that has prior experience with animal shelter projects (e.g., Jackson County Animal Shelter). There is interest in touring the Jackson County shelter for further insights.

Animal control staff and key team members were involved in the interview process and support the recommendation. Adam stated that this is a qualifications-based selection process; negotiations on price and contract will follow after selecting the most qualified firm. Commissioner Greene made the motion to proceed with the County Manager's recommendation of WithersRavenel for the first phase of the project. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. There was unanimous agreement and no objections among board members.

**Approved**

**For:** 5 - Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

## GENERAL SESSION

### VIII. Commissioner Comments

### IX. Announcements

### X. Executive Session

**A.**     [ES 25-17](#)     Legal - G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3)

*The Board entered into Executive Session at 10:00 am and returned from Executive Session at 10:27 am.*

### XI. Adjournment

*Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to adjourn today's meeting at 10:27 am. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*  
**Approved**

**For:** 5 - Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

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