

# Ashe County

150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640



## Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, May 18, 2026

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*

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**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. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer**

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

**III. Consent Agenda**

*Commissioner Greene 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

[MIN 26-12](#) April 20th, 2026 Regular Session Minutes

**Attachments:** [05-18-2026 April 20th, 2026 Regular Session Minutes](#)

[MIN 26-13](#) May 4th, 2026 Regular Session Minutes

**Attachments:** [05-18-2026 May 4th, 2026 Regular Session Minutes](#)

[PRES 26-85](#) Monthly Tax Report for April 2026

**Attachments:** [05-18-2026 Monthly Tax Report April 2026](#)

**IV. Adoption of Agenda****V. Public Comment****VI. Presentations**

[PRES 26-83](#) 9:04 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Landfill Change Order

**Attachments:** [05-18-2026 Change Order Baker's Construction Services \(Landfill\)](#)

*Adam reported a necessary change order after proof rolling revealed a subgrade failure in an old, uncompacted draw area beneath the basin, where organic silty soil and roots lay under a thin clay layer that could not support the liner system or future waste load. Municipal Engineering explained that roughly 5,500 square yards were affected, and the NC Division of Solid Waste would not allow construction to proceed without remediation. Two solutions were outlined: the preferred soil-cement stabilization method—about \$246k–\$250k on unit pricing—and a more expensive undercut and replacement option estimated at \$350k–\$400k. Stabilization would require three 6-inch lifts, verified through proof rolling and independent density testing, and would take about a week and a half*

depending on weather. The board also reviewed available contingencies, including approximately \$183,000 in project contingency and additional remaining engineering allowances. Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to approve the change order. Commissioner Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

**Approved**

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

**PRES 26-78** 9:05 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - DSS Statistics for March 2026, Rylan's Law Statistics and Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program

**Attachments:** [05-18-2026 DSS Statistics March 2026](#)

[05-18-2026 Rylan's Law Statistics](#)

[05-18-2026 Subsidized Child Care Program](#)

Tracie reviewed the DSS Statistics for March 2026 and Ryan's Law fiscal year report drawn from the public Ryan's Law dashboard, confirming full compliance across APS timeliness, Child Support timeliness, and Child Welfare timeliness, including the key metric of monthly face-to-face foster youth visits meeting the 95% target. Additional child welfare measures will appear once backend testing and the statewide transition to Path NC is complete, which should strengthen data quality. Tracie clarified that blank months simply indicate no applications rather than zero performance. Tracy also presented the annual, unchanged Subsidized Child Care Assistance policy, which outlines priority groups—such as foster children and children with developmental disabilities—and applies income eligibility rules for determining subsidy access. Commissioner Killen made the motion to approve the Subsidized Child Care Assistance policy. 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

**PRES 26-79** 9:10 AM - Patty Gambill, Emergency Management Director - Budget Amendment (Insurance Proceeds) Riverview Community Center and Memorandum of Agreement for Emergency Shelters with the School System

**Attachments:** [05-18-2026 Budget Amendment #3 Riverview Community Center](#)

[05-18-2026 Agreement for Emergency Shelters](#)

Patty presented a budget amendment requested to cover Riverview expenses for electrical work and asbestos removal. Funding source: flood insurance proceeds already in hand. Appropriation for the Department of Public Buildings was increased from \$4,654,721 to \$4,749,816. The \$95,095 came from WRIF Flood Insurance proceeds received February 14, 2025. Motion to approve the budget amendment was made by Commissioner Eldreth and seconded by Vice Chairman Powers; all were in approval.

Secondly, Patty presented an updated agreement with the Board of Education for sheltering operations in all schools. The agreement was updated based on lessons learned during Hurricane Helene. The school board has already approved the agreement. A motion made by Commissioner Killen approving the agreement and seconded by Vice

*Chairman Powers; all were in approval.*

**Approved**

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

**PRES 26-80** 9:13 AM - Lynn Caldwell, Todd Community Preservation Organization, Inc.  
- Todd Island Park Budget Request

**Attachments:** [05-18-2026 Todd Community Preservation Org Letter Request](#)

*Lynn Caldwell of the Todd Community Preservation Organization outlined the need for funding Phase 3 of streambank restoration at Todd Island Park, a heavily used recreation area known for trout fishing, paddling, picnicking, and river access. The park has long included a pedestrian bridge and a one-mile trail, though the bridge is currently gone and access is informal. Earlier restoration phases addressed dangerous, eroding vertical banks by reshaping slopes, installing rock vanes to direct flow toward the river center, and planting native vegetation. Phase 2, completed in 2021 with support from Ashe and Watauga counties, held up well during Hurricane Helene, though some repairs are still needed.*

*Phase 3 would restore 1,200–1,300 feet of streambank around the island's south end using the same proven methods, while also improving accessibility through a handicap-accessible bridge, walkway, benches, and fishing areas. Funding relies on grants paired with local matching dollars: an NC Land and Water grant is already submitted, a Division of Water Resources grant is planned, and the New River Conservancy expects to contribute \$15k–\$20k in plantings. The organization has requested \$45,000 from Watauga County and is requesting \$45,000 from this board to meet match requirements. A new pedestrian bridge—estimated at \$300k–\$400k—is a major long-term priority, with grants and a large fundraiser planned. Despite post-Helene sediment changes making the island less distinct, the park remains busy, and members expressed interest in a site visit as the funding request moves into budget discussions. No action taken.*

**No Action Taken**

**PRES 26-81** 9:25 AM - Carrie Vargas, President Ashe County Farmers Market (ACFM)  
- Update

*Carrie Vargas, President of the Ashe County Farmers Market Board, thanked commissioners for their continued support after Hurricane Helene and explained that the market still has unused 2024 county funds because it first relied on dedicated fundraising and grant dollars for food assistance programs. Those outside funds are now fully spent, and the remaining county allocation will carry the market through the summer. She requested a \$5,000 line item in the upcoming county budget to stabilize food assistance programs and overall market operations. Year-to-date food assistance spending totals \$5,691, including \$1,755 in EBT/Double Up Bucks (with \$1,652 reimbursed) and \$3,936 in WIC and Senior Double Up Bucks. Funding sources included prior-year patron donations, Hurricane Helene donations, and small contributions from commissioner vendor slots.*

*Vargas also described operational changes affecting SNAP/EBT. The market's ability to accept SNAP at the market level is temporarily paused because board members—who are not farmers—were asked to provide personal information such as Social Security numbers. With help from Tracie McMillan and SNAP contacts, the plan is for individual farmers to obtain their own SNAP accounts, allowing customers to continue using*

benefits, which the market then doubles through its incentive programs. Participation remains strong, with well over 75 seniors and roughly 30 WIC participants—possibly more than 100 families total—using assistance programs. Saturday vendor turnout typically ranges from 38 to 45 vendors, and Market Manager Tina Hubbard and Treasurer Nikki Shoulders were recognized for strong leadership and financial accountability.

**No Action Taken**

**PRES 26-82** 9:35 AM - Paige Stephens, JCPC - Ashe JCPC Annual Plan FY 2026-2027

**Attachments:** [05-18-2026 JCPC Ashe County Plan FY 26-27](#)

Paige Stephens presented and requested approval of the Juvenile Crimes Prevention Council (JCPC) annual plan for FY 2026–2027, including the required county match. The group noted the county and county manager have representation on the council, and the county has supported the program for many years. State requires a 20% local match to access the state funds and support/monitor services for at-risk and delinquent youth. It was clarified that not all of the match is cash; some is in-kind. Match was noted as slightly higher than prior year, though the plan was generally described as consistent with prior years. A motion was made by Commissioner Eldreth and seconded by Commissioner Greene to approve the FY 2026–2027 JCPC annual plan. All raised their hands in favor.

**Approved**

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

**PRES 26-86** 9:40 AM - Patricia Calloway, Executive Director Generations Ashe - Agency Update and May Request From the Approved Contingency Fund

**Attachments:** [05-18-2026 Request for Fourth Installment of Approved Contingency Funds](#)

Patricia requested and received approval to draw the fourth monthly \$60,000 contingency installment to maintain operations. A motion was made by Commissioner Killen and seconded by Vice Chairman Powers to draw down the monthly \$60,000 line of credit for continued operations; the group voted in favor. Patricia reported progress on facility compliance work, including fire suppression upgrades scheduled for the week of May 25 and the reopening of the assisted living common area camera system after a \$3,000 equipment replacement. Assisted living operations continue to stabilize: contract staffing costs have dropped dramatically from \$81,235/month last year to roughly \$10,000–\$12,000/month, attributed to stronger leadership and improved local hiring. The current census is 43 residents, with one move-in and one discharge pending. The organization is still pursuing the facility sale and is awaiting USDA required appraisals, which may be delayed due to difficulty finding comparable properties.

Patricia also highlighted recent community engagement, including a well-attended senior health fair and an upcoming Classic Rock Jam Fest fundraiser on May 30. Social workers have completed about six neutral guardianship evaluations for the courts since Christmas. At the children's center, staffing needs include a preschool teacher, and demand remains high with a 30–40 child waiting list. Although the license technically allows for 60 children, practical capacity is closer to 45 due to space and ratio requirements, with only a few part-time openings currently available.

**Approved**

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

PRES 26-84 9:45 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - FY 2026-2027 Budget Presentation

*Adam presented Ashe County's FY 2026–2027 budget which centers on rebuilding after Hurricane Helene, managing rising state and federal mandates, and preparing long-term infrastructure like the new middle school, landfill expansion, and industrial park growth. Leaders highlight inflation—especially fuel—along with new state health plan surcharges and higher retirement rates as major cost drivers, while also investing in workforce stability through part-time pay increases and targeted technology upgrades in Social Services. The budget launches early groundwork for the county-operated EMS system, supported by recommended hires to build operational and financial structures ahead of the 2028 transition. Major capital and community projects continue, including Riverview Community Center reconstruction, Family Central improvements through a PARTF grant, Environmental Services upgrades supported by a \$3 million state grant, and airport perimeter fencing funded largely by the state. To maintain service levels amid these pressures, the proposal includes a 2-cent property tax increase and emphasizes transparency through public hearings, online posting, and outreach.*

#### GENERAL SESSION

#### VII. Commissioner Comments

#### VIII. Announcements

#### IX. Executive Session

#### X. Adjournment

*Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to adjourn today's meeting at 10:48 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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