

# **Ashe County**

*150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640*



## **Meeting Minutes - Draft**

**Monday, June 16, 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:** 4 - Vice Chairman Jerry D. Powers, Commissioner Mike Eldreth, Commissioner Russell Killen and Commissioner Wes Greene

**Absent:** 1 - Chairperson Todd McNeill

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

*Commissioner Eldreth led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Killen offered the opening Prayer.*

**III. Adoption of the Agenda**

*Commissioner Killen made the motion to adopt the June 16th, 2025 meeting agenda. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Adopted**

**For:** 4 - Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**IV. Consent Agenda**

*Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to approve the June 16th, 2025 Consent Agenda. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

**For:** 4 - Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**[MIN 25-16](#)** June 2nd, 2025 Regular Session Minutes

**Attachments:** [6-16-2025 June 2nd, 2025 Regular Session Minutes](#)

**[MISC 25-19](#)** Budget Amendments, Updating & Approval of Project Ordinances (Sandy)

**[MISC 25-20](#)** Monthly Tax Report for May 2025

**Attachments:** [6-16-2025 Monthly Tax Report - May 2025](#)

**[MISC 25-23](#)** High Country Workforce Development Board Reappointment

**Attachments:** [6-16-2025 High Country Workforce Dev Reappointment - Edward Hinson](#)

**V. Public Comment**

*At 9:02 am Vice Chairman Powers opened the floor for the Public Comment portion of today's meeting.*

*Tammy Tanoury with Friends of Ashe County Animal Control spoke on the conditions of the Ashe County Animal Shelter. She stated that the shelter was in serious jeopardy of being shut down due to multiple Department of Agricultural violations. She stated that the building has numerous repair and maintenance issues that she says have not been corrected. She stated some of these include poor weather stripping, broken windows and animal enclosures that have sharp edges, rust, chipping of sealant, which could lead to possible exposure to disease for the animals. Poor heating and cooling for the animals, as well as the staff. She said that one of her biggest concerns is the area outside for exercise and for bathroom use for the dogs, it is inadequate according to the department of agriculture. She said the dogs are in a Kennel 24/7 without being allowed to go outside. She said that the citizens of Ashe County would like for the county commissioners to approve and budget for architectural design plans to be drawn up this fiscal year for a new shelter. If approved a new shelter could possibly be funded the following year. She stated that in 2023 alone our Animal Control housed approximately 1044 dogs and cats. And that in 2024 there were 950 dogs and cats that were housed in our facility and from January until May of this year alone we had 480 dogs and cats in our facility. She stated that the shelter has repeatedly asked for a new facility which has never been granted. With these ongoing violations that have not been addressed due to maintenance issues. We would like you to help us understand why this is a continuing problem, that they continue getting violations that are not being met, and their needs are not being addressed. A new animal, shelter and location would mean the ability to spay and neuter animals before they're adopted out, which means less population problems for the county as a whole. The staff would have the ability to properly enforce untagged animals. Also, it would be an adequate space for walking and exercising the dogs. She said a centralized location could mean more volunteers and more resources for our Animal Control staff and the animals. She stated that these healthy dogs and cats would not be euthanized on a regular basis if we had a larger newer facility in a central location. She asked county commissioners to tour the shelter themselves if they haven't recently and see for themselves the deficiencies of our county facility. She said we need a new shelter no questions asked. this shelter has been an ongoing problem and issue for many years. It was not meant to hold animals for any length of time and sadly it has been. We must do better, please consider plans for a new facility in your upcoming budget.*

*Dar Joseph Tanoury with Friends of Ashe County Animal Control also spoke on the conditions at the Ashe County Animal Shelter. He asked for budgeting for a new Animal Control facility, possibly include it in a space in the new Agricultural Center. He stated the current facility is not conducive to the proper care of animals.*

*Debra Speas from Lansing also spoke on conditions at the Ashe County Animal Shelter. She stated that she is a regular volunteer at the shelter several days a week. She spoke on the inspections conducted by state inspectors. She said that the seals on the garage door of the facility were in poor condition and during heavy rain water comes into the kennels. She spoke about the rusty kennels, no outdoor spaces, chipped paint. She said that there is not a bathing station and that animals come in dirty all the time. She also spoke on the need for veterinary care in the county. She said also that the county should consider changing from Open Admission to a Managed Admission of animals. Debra asked commissioners to consider visiting the Wilkes Animal Control Facility.*

*Peggy Sturgill from West Jefferson took the podium and stated that she first wanted to apologize to Commissioners if she had offended anyone with her FaceBook post. Saying she will apologize for offending you. But she won't apologize for fighting for the animals. She said everyone knows I love my animals and I'm very passionate about it so it could've been worded differently and I do apologize saying she meant no offense to*

anyone. She stated that she did need help understanding something, that she'd talked to several of the commissioners and everyone knows what we need. You know the conditions of the Animal Control. She stated that the problem is, if Animal Control is getting everything that Joe Testerman is asking for, why are we still having all these violations? Why is it not being fixed? She asked if commissioners knew about all the requests. She said she needed help understanding that if he's getting everything he is asking for why are there still so many problems at Animal Control. Obviously there's a break in communication somewhere, She said she would love to have a meeting with all of you, I would love to get the facts straight and come up with some solutions for all this stuff. She said she knew it couldn't be fixed overnight, but we need to get something on the agenda and something in the budget for this year or next year and get started because just talking about it is not helping. I appreciate you letting me speak. She stated most of you know how to get in touch with me. Call me anytime. I'd be happy to talk with you and try to come up with solutions and thank you.

Amanda Horton from West Jefferson said "I am proud mom of two rescue dogs and I recently found out about the conditions at the shelter. I also recently found out that 27 cats were put down in one day and that just feels extreme to me. I'm sure the main reason was that there was no space to house them. Without having people who can come in and play with the animals, communicate with the animals, get in there and make them more socialized. They're not going to be adopted. So if we don't correct things at this facility then basically every animal that goes there is being sentenced to death. I just ask you to dig down deep in your hearts and if you ever loved an animal, if you've ever had a dog or a cat, that was just your spirit animal, that you think of them because I know when I rescued my dogs, they rescued me back.

Seeing no movement from the citizens in attendance to offer additional comments Vice Chairman Powers closed the Public Comment portion of today's meeting at 9:22 am.

Each commissioner then took a turn speaking on their thoughts in regard to the Ashe County Animal Shelter.

## VI. Presentations

### MISC 25-16 9:05 AM - PUBLIC HEARING - FY 2025/26 Proposed Budget Ordinance

Vice Chairman Powers called the Public Hearing on the FY 2025/26 Proposed Budget Ordinance to order at 9:28 am. No comments were offered by those in attendance. Vice Chairman Powers then closed the Public Hearing on the FY 2025/26 Proposed Budget Ordinance at 9:29 am.

### MISC 25-17 9:10 AM - PUBLIC HEARING - FY 2025/26 Proposed Budget for Economic Development Expenditures

Vice Chairman Powers called the Public Hearing on the FY 2025/26 Proposed Budget for Economic Development Expenditures to order at 9:31 am. No comments were offered by those in attendance. Vice Chairman Powers then closed the Public Hearing on the FY 2025/26 Proposed Budget for Economic Development Expenditures at 9:32 am.

### MISC 25-18 9:13 AM - Approval of the FY 2025/26 Budget Ordinance & the FY 2025/26 Economic Development Budget Expenditures

Commissioner Greene made the motion to approve the FY 2025/26 Budget Ordinance for:  
(One hundred, sixty-six million, five hundred seventy-nine thousand, two hundred and

*eighty-eight dollars)*

*To set the ad valorem tax rate for FY2025-2026 at: (.44) Forty-four cents (per \$100 of assessed value)*

*To set the fire tax rates (per \$100 of assessed value) as follows:*

*Creston \$.060 (6 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*Fleetwood \$.040 (4 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*Glendale Springs \$.070 (7 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*Lansing \$.060 (6 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*Warrensville \$.120 (12 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*Jefferson \$.039 (3.9 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*New River \$.070 (7 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*West Jefferson \$.060 (6 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*Laurel Springs \$.070 (7 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*Pond Mountain \$.080 (8 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*Todd \$.070 (7 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*Deep Gap \$.040 (4 cents per \$100 of assessed value)*

*To set the Rescue/EMS Tax district rate for FY2025-2026 at 2.4 cents (per \$100 of assessed value) with 4/10 of one cent going to the Ashe County Rescue Squad and 2 cents going into the County - Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of establishing and equipping a county-run Ambulance Service when the current contract with Ashe Medics ends June 30, 2030.*

*To set the Solid Waste Disposal Tipping Fees at the Landfill effective July 1st at:*

*Commercial \$ 75.00*

*Industrial \$ 65.00*

*LCID \$ 55.00*

*Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

*Commissioner Greene made the motion to approve the FY 2025/26 Economic Development Budget Expenditures. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**



For: 4 - Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**MISC 25-21** 9:15 AM - Nick Farmerie, Community Development Director & Assistant County Manager - Inspection Fee Rate Adjustments

**Attachments:** [6-16-2025 Inspection Dept. Permit Fees and Fire Marshal Fee Schedule](#)

*Nick Farmerie, Community Development Director & Assistant County Manager presented to the Board the proposed Inspection Fee Rate Adjustments for their approval. Nick stated that we had asked, as a part of the budget process for Josh Steelman, our fire marshal and Brian Carson our Chief Building Inspector to review some of the fees associated with both fire inspections and general building inspections. Nick said that the two documents attached to the commissioner's agendas details what they came up with. Nick said the for the inspections department, everything that is highlighted is recommended to increase by \$25 to stay in line with neighboring counties. The second page is the recommended Increases for the fire fees. Commissioner Killen made the motion to approve the Inspection Fee Rate Adjustments. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

For: 4 - Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**PRES 25-92** 9:20 AM - Sheriff Howell - Retirement Recognition for Lt. Randy Lewis, Civil Division ACSO

**Attachments:** [6-16-2025 Retirement Info Randy Lewis](#)

*Sheriff Howell spoke on the retirement of ACSO Lt. Randy Lewis who was also present at today's meeting. Sheriff Howell stated that Mr. Lewis is the last of a generation in law enforcement. Randy started part-time in 1988 and he is the last of a group from the 80's, 90s' and the early 2000's. Randy has been in the Law Enforcement family for a total of 37 years. Serving Ashe County for 28 of those years. Sheriff Howell said we are very proud of Randy and all his accomplishments. He invited everyone to the Retirement Celebration at the Sheriffs Office next week. Commissioners presented Lt. Lewis with a retirement plaque and thanked him for his service to Ashe County.*

**PRES 25-93** 9:24 AM - Karen Broome, JCPC - Presentation of the JCPC Annual Plan and JCPC Board Member Reappointments

**Attachments:** [6-16-2025 JCPC County Plan - Ashe FY-2025-26](#)  
[6-16-2025 JCPC Board Members for Reappointment](#)

*Ashley Call, Chairperson of the Ashe County JCPC was present to day to present in place of Karen Broome. Ashley presented the FY 2025/26 Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) Plan for Ashe County. After some discussion Commissioner Killen made the motion to approve the FY 2025/26 Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) Plan for Ashe County. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

*Ashley also stated that the Ashe Juvenile Crime Prevention Council is recommending Commissioner Approval for the following members to be re-appointed to serve a term through June 2027: Jamie Litte, Ashe County Schools, Brant Wilkins, Chief Court*

*Counselor, Adam Stumb, County Manager, Paige Stephens, Daymark, Alberta Swain, Parks and Recreation, Christelle Marsh, Vaya Health, Matthew Levchuk, Assistant District Attorney. Commissioner Greene made the motion to approve the reappointments. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*  
**Approved**

**For:** 4 - Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

## **GENERAL SESSION**

### **VII. Commissioner Comments**

### **VIII. Announcements**

### **IX. Executive Session**

### **X. Adjournment**

*Commissioner Killen made the motion to adjourn today's meeting at 9:52 am. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*  
**Approved**

**For:** 4 - Vice Chairman Powers, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

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