

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, October 7, 2024

9:00 AM

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

Chairperson Todd McNeill

Vice Chair Chuck Olive

Commissioner William Sands

Commissioner Jerry D. Powers

Commissioner Mike Eldreth

BUSINESS SESSION

Present: 5 - Vice Chairman Chuck Olive, Chairperson Todd McNeill, Commissioner William Sands, Commissioner Jerry D. Powers and Commissioner Mike Eldreth

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

Chairman McNeill called the October 7th, 2024 Regular Session Meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer

Vice Chairman Olive led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Sands offered the opening Prayer.

III. Adoption of the Agenda**IV. Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Sands made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Vice Chairman Olive, Chairperson McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Powers and Commissioner Eldreth

V. Public Comment

At 9:02 Am Chairman McNeill opened the floor for the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Richard Calhoun from Creston took the podium. He began by saying that he wanted to recognize all the efforts of assistance from inside the county and outside the county since hurricane Helene. He talked about how farmers need help this time of year to move cattle. He asked the commissioners to consider the ability of the roads now to handle the Christmas Tree tractor & trailers.

Lexi Danner from Todd took the podium and talked about the dangers of real estate investors coming to our area in our current state of emergency, while citizens are emotionally vulnerable. She stated these investors would offer them a small amount for their damaged property/land, which is worth more and profit from the misfortunes of Ashe County citizens. She asked that citizens be warned of this possibility and asked commissioner to help citizens remain in their homes or on their property.

No further comments were offered. Chairman McNeill closed the Public Comment portion of the meeting at 9:09 AM.

VI. Presentations

[PRES
24-163](#)

9:05 AM - Patty Gambill, Emergency Management Coordinator -
Emergency Operations Update

Patty stated Ashe County has one confirmed fatality from hurricane Helene. She also

stated that we do not have any person/s who have been reported missing. Teams went door-to-door to assess damage and tried to determine if there were any victims that were out there that we had not reached. She said these were top-notch professional teams with a vast resources with them. They had structural engineers, canines even had their own security force team. What they found was that 199 structures with minor damage 307 structures with major damage 151 structures identified as destroyed. The word "structures" means buildings, bridges and roadways. The National Guard flew reconnaissance missions earlier this week along the stream pass and the North fork and the South Fork of the New River, Buffalo Creek and a couple other creeks and that data has been turned over to DOT and other agencies that will need that information in the recovery process. Patty stated they are conducting daily calls with all the fire departments to determine what their needs are, the four departments in the northwestern end of the county Pond Mountain, Creston, Lansing and Warrensville have reported to us that they have some sort of path into all areas and they are good on supplies. Ashe County Sheriffs office are delivering items like O2-tanks and other supplies. Volunteers are coordinating hot meals in some of those locations as well. We're currently housing people in the shelter at Ashe County high school, that shelter was initially set up by DSS staff but has transitioned to Red Cross control. We are working on a transition plan for when that shelter closes and it'll be sometime, we anticipate, around opening of school. Approved public assistance and individual assistance and has set up an online application process so the individuals, business and public entities affected by the disaster can request assistance. There's two websites for that, one is FEMA's website at [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov), that's for businesses and churches and Public entities like County Government. Individual assistance applications are available on "disasterassistance.gov". In addition to applying online, citizens can also go to the old Lansing Townhall, where we have set up a FEMA field office that has people there that can assist residence in completing their applications. Patty stated that we also have disaster survivor assistance crews on the ground going door-to-door helping people do applications. We requested a Disaster Recovery Center, Central disaster recovery center includes additional agencies that can provide assistance like small business administration USDA so that all those helpful things are in one place. People that want to volunteer locally we have a phone number establish that they can call it. 336-740-9282 and people with needs. People who have "needs", supplies, blankets, that type of thing can call 336-846-5877. Both of these are manned call centers. Patty stated they're only manned during the day, but they are listening to their messages. What they do is pair up with people who want help and if they can't pair that up, then they'll send it to us to get those supplies out to where they needed to go. The hospital has also requested some critical medical supplies that they have been unable to get and we are working with the state to try to get those sourced out for the hospital. Animal Control has been conducting welfare checks and livestock running loose cases. They're also hauling animal food and water that they're giving out to the public as needed or requested. Patty stated they are currently using warehouses, the location here at Fallen heroes Drive, the one on Central School Road as storage sites for incoming supplies. She said they have a third site that they're using for storage only. The North Carolina National Guard troops have helped us organize in inventory in those warehouses to make it easier to fulfill specific request for goods. The town of Lansing requested assistance with operating their distribution site so we're sending two national guards to assist them today. The public can pick up supplies at family Central Cafeteria and in each of the three elementary schools. There's also a large number of volunteer organizations in the county that have also opened places for the public to get supplies. Tracy McMillian, DSS is working on putting together a booklet that details all of the resources that are currently available to the public, once she gets that out we're going put it on the county's social media site and push out hard copies to the community. Patty said the county is getting it's laundry truck that they've been requesting today and it is supposed to be here and they will be setting up at Blue Ridge

Elementary school behind the building. We hope to have it up and running by the end of today. She stated that as of this morning there were still 3226 households without electricity. Laurel Springs fire department has set up a combination shower unit at fire station and that can be access 24 hours a day. The primary debris site is a pre-certified site that we set up several years ago with the landfill it is ready to go.

No Action Taken

[PRES](#)
[24-164](#)

(CANCELED) - Emergency Operations Plan Approval -(Postponed)

[PRES](#)
[24-165](#)

9:10 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Presentation of Actions Taken During Emergency Meetings

Adam stated that the commissioners did meet three times in an emergency session since Helene devastated our area. He spoke on the debris site and that it's location is going to be different from the actual landfill location and the board did vote to approve the rental contract for equipment for the debris site. Adam said that finally on Friday, October 4th, 2024 Commissioners did move forward with the debris removal contract to move from a push and shove to removal and shipping. Adam also mentioned that the notes from those meetings will be generated into minutes and they will be available on our website as normal and in addition to the meeting minutes of this meeting, this being the first meeting we've been able to video since the storm and it will be on the website as well.

No Action Taken

[PRES](#)
[24-166](#)

9:15 AM - Devon Houck, Board of Elections - Elections Update

Devon stated that they were 28 days from election day, will start early voting October 17th, 2024 at the Agriculture Building here in the Government Complex October 17th, 2024 through November 2nd, 2024. We are open every day except for Sunday. She stated that she was meeting with the State Board today to determine alternate locations for precincts affected by flood waters that are now unusable. She said voters may contact her office if they have any questions at 336-846-5570 or come by the office. Devon said the precinct workers training has been moved to the Agricultural Building and starts this week. She also talked about the procedure for lost ballots.

No Action Taken

[PRES](#)
[24-167](#)

9:20 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Golden Leaf Shell Building Grant Update

Adam stated that there were two grants with Golden Leaf out there all related to the industrial park. He explained that one is underway, which is the grading for the two lots at the top of the industrial park, that work should be completed. Adam said the good news is that Golden Leaf has extended all grants in the western part of the states. This particular grant deadline has been extended to December 31, 2024, so essentially by the end of the year we should have that grant itself completed. An engineer will be here for the Commissioner meeting on 10/21/2024 to present an update on the shell building.

No Action Taken

GENERAL SESSION

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements**IX. Executive Session****ES 24-8****G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel**

Commissioner Powers made the motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:55 am.

Commissioner Sand seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Commissioner Sands made the motion to return from Executive Session at 10:03 am.

Approved

For: 5 - Vice Chairman Olive, Chairperson McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Powers and Commissioner Eldreth

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Powers made the motion to adjourn the October 7th, 2024 Regular Session Meeting at 10:03. am. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Vice Chairman Olive, Chairperson McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Powers and Commissioner Eldreth

Citizens with disabilities requiring special needs to access the services or public meetings of Ashe County Government should contact the County Manager's Office three days prior to the meeting by calling (336) 846-5501.

Note

uni

Todd McNeill, Chairman

Missy Seivers
Clerk to the Board