

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

11:00 AM

EMERGENCY MEETING

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

Chairperson Todd McNeill

Vice Chair Chuck Olive

Commissioner William Sands

Commissioner Jerry D. Powers

Commissioner Mike Eldreth

EMERGENCY MEETING

Present: 3 - Chairperson Todd McNeill, Commissioner William Sands and Commissioner Jerry D. Powers

Absent: 2 - Vice Chairman Chuck Olive and Commissioner Mike Eldreth

I. 11:00 AM - Meeting Called to Order at the Ashe County Courthouse

[PRES](#)
[24-161](#)

Emergency Meeting called Wednesday, October 2, 2024 to review the Hurricane Helene Emergency Operations and take any necessary action related to same.

Members present: Chairman Todd McNeill, Jerry Powers, and William Sands. Absent: Vice Chairman Chuck Olive and Mike Eldreth

Also present: County Manager Adam Stumb, Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill, Tax Administrator Chris Lambert, Finance Officer Sandra Long, and Environmental Services Director Scott Hurley.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 11:13 p.m. as soon as a quorum was present. Patty began the meeting by updating the Board on current emergency operations. She reported that Fire & Rescue folks from all over the state were in Ashe to volunteer. One 80 person USAR team covered 148 in the NW areas of the county on Tuesday. They found 650 structures in good condition, 27 in need of repairs and 3 missing. They will cover the NE areas of the county of Wednesday. The National Guard recon team was in the county today and was assessing the river areas. At least 322 planes had brought donated items into the airport on Tuesday. Volunteers from the County and Schools were at the airport to unload the items and get them to Family Central and the Fire Departments for distribution. Today, the volunteers were making and distributing individual boxes to be delivered in remote areas. She reported that getting full tanks of oxygen were the biggest problem. Two hundred were supposed to be delivered to the county today and the Sheriff's office will deliver those and switch out for the empty tanks and continue to make welfare checks. Insulin is supposed to be coming in. A Free Medical Clinic will be held Saturday. Ready-to-eat-meals and tarps are being distributed with flyers in the box giving information about community resources that are available when the residents can get out.

Scott then updated the Board on the Landfill – He said there was still no power there or at the Animal Shelter. They had hooked up a generator to run the scales so they would be able to weigh the trucks. The state had approved the Emergency Debris staging area and they were getting it ready to begin accepting debris from roads, bridges, etc. One sediment basin came loose but it caused no damage. To be able to begin accepting debris, Scott told the Board he had rented a Track hoe Excavator and a Loader because the old loader currently has problems and the two older Track hoes need repairs and there is no time to work on them during this emergency period. The cost for the rent of the two pieces of equipment will be approximately \$20,000 per month and are expected to be needed for two months, possibly longer. The track hoe was delivered yesterday and the loader may come today. He said he had ordered 400 tons of gravel to make a road into the debris area and improve the current road that leads to the area.

The Board then discussed the convenience center operations. The County Manager said their plan was to continue to operate through this week from 7 am until 5 pm, then next week to return to the normal 7 am to 7 pm schedule.

Scott said he may have to begin hauling leachate soon to lower the leachate lagoon level. He is currently talking with the Town of Jefferson and Wilkes to come up with a plan.

Patty stated that information regarding the convenience center operations needs to be put out in a press release.

Scott stated there was damage at two convenience centers. He reported that nothing washed away or was lost from the Doggett Road site but there was mud that needed cleaned up and the things inside the fence needed placed back where they are supposed to go.

He brought pictures of the Riverview Convenience site to share with the Board. He said 10 dumpsters had floated away. He had seen three of them downriver but they were mangled and inaccessible. He had seen no sign of the other seven. The single stream recycling bin was laid over but was still usable. The compactor, though, would have to be examined by the company to see if it could be fixed. The guard shack is still on the pad but he said it was full of mud. They would have to see if it would be salvageable. The fence is gone. He said they would take the backhoe to Riverview and scrap off all the mud from the concrete pad. Scott asked for direction on whether to close the site down or what they wanted to do. Chairman McNeill asked about how long it would take to put up a temporary fence. Jerry asked about moving the tire trailer from the Bina site and adding some more dumpsters there. After discussion, Scott said he thought he could keep two roll offs at the Riverview site most of the time and he could have a convenience center attendant there to monitor what goes into them. He said people would throw debris and contaminants in them if there wasn't someone on-site to monitor them. The roll offs would be moved off-site at night and an empty one could be put there by 7 am most mornings. Jerry agreed that the roll offs would have to be monitored. The board agreed that this seemed to be a good plan and for Scott to move forward if he had the manpower. He explained that during this period of debris cleanup and the extra trips to Riverview, there would be overtime for some of these workers. Patty and Sandy talked about how Scott would have to keep up with the time employees worked on storm related tasks for FEMA reimbursement claims.

Patty then explained to the Board that as part of the County's Disaster Plan, the State of NC prequalifies contractors to work in disasters. She requested the board approve requesting the pre-positioned contractor begin work to clear the side of the roads in the county. She said they would push the rocks and other debris off the sides of the roads, freeing NCDOT to continue work on rebuilding roads and replacing culverts and bridges. The contract was pre-established not to exceed \$2 million dollars. The cost of this work will be reimbursable by FEMA but will have to be paid to the contractor by the county as invoiced. A motion was made by William to sign the notice-to-proceed with ___X___ company as presented; seconded by Jerry and carried unanimously.

The Board asked the County Manager to get a notice out to department heads to limit their purchases to what is needed for regular and storm related operations so as not to cause a cash flow problem for the county as we incur the extra expenses. It is usually a good while before FEMA monies are reimbursed.

Other updates –

Chris said Eagleview began flying the county today to get new photography to compare the pictures from before the storm. He said the Tax office was going out in the field to begin assessments this week. He said they were stopping Business/Personal property tax audits for now and letters had gone out regarding this. They have also stopped assessing new construction for the time being to focus on flood related assessments.

The Animal Shelter is still closed and has no power. They have a water tank and the animals on hand are being well taken care of.

The Airport is open and many planes are flying in on a daily basis bringing supplies.

All ballots and equipment for the Board of Elections are safely stored and Devon is working on getting a site-plan combining some voting precincts in areas where the current voting sites were destroyed. This has to be presented to and approved by the NC Board of Elections.

Cooperative Extension – John Cothren is working to get hay brought in for farmers who lost their supply to floodwaters.

The Inspections Department is helping Emergency Management this week and may begin next week permitting and inspecting storm related damages only.

The IT department has installed Starlink equipment at all fire departments so communities will have wi-fi accessibility.

Parks & Recreation is helping with distribution at Family Central. Adam said he and Kevin had decided that fall sports will be cancelled due to the storm damages.

Volunteer Coordination efforts - Jennifer Richardson may be located at Family Central for awhile and some volunteers will be assigned there to help her.

*The Child Day Care Centers are getting opened back up now.
The Hospital operations are good.*

Emergency Operations meetings are being held between all the coordinating agencies at 2:00 p.m. daily at the Courthouse.

Staff will look into how fees are to be handled at the landfill during storm-related events between now and Monday.

The board was reminded of the previously scheduled special meeting set for Friday, October 4, 2024 at 11:00 for another update and any necessary action related to the disaster operations.

Approved

For: 3 - Chairperson McNeill, Commissioner Sands and Commissioner Powers

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

IX. Executive Session

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Jerry Powers to adjourn at 12:15 p.m.; seconded by William Sands and carried unanimously.

Approved

For: 3 - Chairperson McNeill, Commissioner Sands and Commissioner Powers

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.

Todd McNeill, Chairman

**Missy Seivers
Clerk to the Board**