

# Ashe County

150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640



## Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, April 20, 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*

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

**III. Consent Agenda**

*Chairman McNeill outlined the consent agenda with routine items and asked whether everyone had reviewed it. Commissioner Eldreth asked to take up the last consent agenda item separately and vote on it independently. That item being: "Reappointment of Josh Roten to WCC Board of Trustees", Chairman McNeill agreed and noted the item (referenced as a Wilkes Community College item) would be pulled from the consent agenda and placed at the end of the overall agenda. Chairman McNeill asked for a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. Commissioner Greene made the motion to approve the remaining items on 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

**[PRES 26-52](#)** 2026 New River Marathon DOT Letter

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 New River Marathon DOT Letter](#)

**[MIN 26-10](#)** April 6th, 2026 Regular Session Minutes

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 April 6th 2026 Regular Session Minutes](#)

**[PRES 26-58](#)** Monthly Tax Report March 2026

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 Monthly Tax Report March 2026](#)

**IV. Adoption of Agenda**

*Chairman McNeill requested to add a time-sensitive item to the agenda: a request from the Town of West Jefferson for consideration of a water easement. The request is time-sensitive due to an EDA grant deadline, and Nick will present the related information. The board agreed to place the added item at the end of the agenda. Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded Commissioner Killen, and approved unanimously by the board.*

**Adopted**

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

## V. Public Comment

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

*Joanne Kuszaj (Partners in Public Health Board chair for APP Healthcare; Jefferson resident) reported APP Healthcare recently laid off 23 positions due to a budget shortfall amid rising healthcare and environmental services costs over the last five years. She emphasized the local economic impact of losing 23 county households' jobs, tax contributions, and spending. Year-to-date revenues were cited as \$2.8M, with some shortfall attributed to delayed Medicaid payments. Year-to-date personnel expenses were cited as \$2.8M; total expenses with benefits were cited as \$4.2M. Cost pressures noted included increased healthcare costs, competitive salaries due to staffing shortages, and increased state health plan costs requiring higher departmental contributions. She stated APP Healthcare helps keep people out of the hospital and keeps people working through clinic services. Quality metrics were said to be improving, including depression screening up 85% and improved diabetes control (uncontrolled/unknown moving from 57% to 27%). Patient mix and need were highlighted: over 50% of patients are self-pay or Medicaid; 28% are below 100% of the federal poverty level. She asked the county for budget approval.*

*Nan Jones (Chestnut Hill; APP Healthcare board patient representative) thanked commissioners and shared personal experience relying on Ashe County Health Department after losing income/insurance while caregiving for a spouse with frontotemporal dementia. She said she remains a patient even with Medicare and the state health plan because the sliding pay scale is critical when finances are tight. She praised staff professionalism, compassion, and dignity in care, and urged the county to find a way to increase funding for the Ashe County Health Department. She referenced Micah 6:8 as a call to fairness, mercy, compassion, and humility in decision-making.*

*Jeff Land (West Jefferson) suggested that if the 23 positions are ultimately lost, the commission hold a special moment at a meeting to invite affected staff, acknowledge them, and thank them for their service. He referenced an Ashe Times headline characterizing prior requests for transparency as having an "aggressive tone," and asked that "aggression" not be used as a label, arguing it can shut down dialogue. He anticipated ongoing public attendance at future commission meetings as the community seeks an equitable approach to budget decisions and potential cuts.*

*Lou Zeller, Fleetwood referenced a resolution presented on April 6, 2026 intended to communicate to state and federal legislative delegations how high-level budget decisions impact local governments; they said it was denied the same day with little public debate. He asked the commission to reconsider denying the resolution, warning that cuts to programs like SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, public schools, and others would harm Ashe County. Points raised included projected state tax policy changes (corporate income tax rate falling to zero by 2030; personal income tax cuts), and concerns that fiscal pressures will shift to counties via property and local sales taxes. Local conditions cited included 12% uninsured, rent unaffordable for 42%, and 38% of residents being low income.*

*Dolly Reeves (Cooper Grove) described relying on safety net programs (SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, childcare subsidies, housing/food support) after leaving an abusive relationship and becoming temporarily homeless with young children. She said these programs enabled her to restart, work (including at the health department), return to college, and support her children; she argued cuts erase life-and-death supports. She asked the commission to reconsider the transparency resolution and to urge state legislators (named: Hise and*

Pickett) to pass a state budget that taxes corporations and fully funds safety net programs.

Nancy Beth Weaver (Warrensville) criticized ongoing cuts tied to failure to pass a state budget and "H.R. 1, Big Beautiful Bill," arguing impacts fall hardest on people already facing poverty. She highlighted the importance of APP Health services, including dental care access, and linked poor oral health to serious health outcomes. She raised concerns about mental health/substance use needs and stated there is one mental health provider for every 590 residents. She argued the resolution is not merely symbolic and asked commissioners to "take a stand" and convey Ashe County's needs to state and federal officials.

Seeing no movement from those citizens in attendance, Chairman McNeill closed the Public Comment portion of today's meeting at 9:23 am.

## VI. Presentations

### [PRES 26-53](#) 9:05 AM - Josh Steelman, Fire Marshal - Introduction of State Fire Marshal Brian Taylor and Recognition of Local Fire Departments

Fire Marshal Josh Steelman, joined by Deputy Fire Marshal Ernie Eldreth, announced that three more volunteer fire departments have successfully lowered their insurance ratings, joining previously recognized departments including Pond Mountain, Todd, New River, West Jefferson, and Jefferson. Steelman emphasized that these improvements reflect the dedication of local volunteer firefighters. State Fire Marshal Chief Brian Taylor highlighted that these are community ratings, shaped not only by fire departments but also by water systems and 911 communications. He credited earlier legislative work that allowed North Carolina to conduct its own insurance ratings and noted that increased staffing has enabled a consistent five year inspection cycle statewide. Rating components were explained as: 50% fire department 40% water distribution, 10% communications. A major focus of the state initiative has been helping departments previously stuck at the basic "9S" level achieve lower ratings for the first time.

Departments recognized for new ratings:

Warrensville FD (Chief Ashley): improved from 9 to 5/9E,

Fleetwood FD (Chief Weinberger): achieved 5/9E,

Glendale Springs FD (Chief Cox): achieved 6/9E.

State Fire Marshall Taylor noted that a 5 rating is a significant accomplishment, and that Glendale Springs "6" rating was influenced largely by geography and mutual aid factors rather than departmental shortcomings. Inspector Marcus emphasized that improved ratings come from rigorous work: equipment upkeep, documentation, testing, training, and managing water supply challenges in areas without hydrants. County and commissioner speakers thanked volunteers for their service and sacrifices, noting that better ratings can reduce homeowners' insurance costs—providing a direct benefit from local fire tax investments. The event closed with lighthearted appreciation, including a joke about barbecue, and an invitation for state officials to return to Ashe County.

**No Action Taken**

### [PRES 26-54](#) 9:15 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - DSS Statistics for February 2026 and a Path NC Update

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 DSS Statistics February 2026](#)

[4-20-2026 PATH NC Information](#)

Tracie began by discussing Program Statistics. Foster care numbers have decreased to

23 children, including 3 young adults in the 18–21 program. Adult guardianship caseload remains high for a small county, with 61 individuals served as of February. Disaster Case Management – Hurricane Helene Total disaster-related funding received: \$926,000 (grants, fundraising, nonprofit support). Funds spent on home repairs: \$564,000. Remaining balance: ~\$361,000. Open cases in February: 47; roughly 10 cases have since closed. The goal is to close remaining cases by late June. NC Works will continue funding one case manager through August. If cases remain afterward, UMCOR is prepared to assume case management so no clients are left without support. Remaining cases are more complex, requiring creative partnerships to stretch limited funds (e.g., splitting materials vs. labor). Repair priorities include roofing, flooring, septic, with a new grant expanding to wells and HVAC. Key partners: Samaritan's Purse, Habitat for Humanity, volunteer groups, and a local church (likely Friendship Baptist). Community Resources, DSS maintains a donation and medication closet on the first floor in the Medicaid transportation lobby. Over the counter medications from the medical assistance program are available and will be restocked until supplies run out. Tracie spoke on PATH NC, the state's new child welfare system, replaces the failed NC FAST P4 system (which Ashe County never adopted). Expected benefits: faster access to statewide family history, better kinship placement identification, reduced trauma for children, and improved field safety via mobile app. Ashe County has completed intake and assessment portions. Permanency/foster care training and implementation dates are in the Dear County Director Letter. Ashe County is in Group 3, with a projected go-live of July 2027 (subject to state changes). Staff will train through June and July for onboarding. DSS is coordinating with Traverse on handling legacy records once PATH NC becomes the system of record. Ongoing scanning project continues due to large paper files and disaster risks; records date back to the 1950s. Traverse usage may decrease for child welfare but remains essential for adult services, where no state electronic storage solution is planned. Vice Chairman Powers raised concerns about potential loss of dental services in Ashe County. Tracie clarified its role is Medicaid eligibility, not dental service provision. Medicaid recipients can use the health department or any dentist who accepts Medicaid. DSS is open to community partnerships to explore solutions. Maintaining adequate staffing for Medicaid eligibility remains a priority. Tracie and Adam attended a community land trust meeting with commissioners and community leaders. Tracie expressed hope for establishing Ashe County's first community land trust to expand affordable homeownership, support wealth building, and help residents remain in safe, healthy homes.

#### **No Action Taken**

#### [PRES 26-55](#) 9:25 AM - Kitty Honeycutt, Ashe Chamber of Commerce - 2026 Ashe Bash Update

Kitty shared an update on Ash Bash, now entering its sixth year. The event remains a free, family friendly music festival held on the government complex grounds, and organizers expressed appreciation to the hosts—including Adam—for their continued partnership. Ash Bash consistently attracts large crowds, offering high-quality music at no cost and serving as both a summer highlight for locals and a vacation anchor for some visitors. 2025 Event Details

Date: Saturday, June 6

Music Start Time: 6:00 PM

Lineup:

Kruger Brothers (opening)

Fireside Collective (closing)

One band announced early, about 1.5 months ahead of schedule. Kitty stated that the Kruger Brothers were world-renowned musicians originally from Germany, later Switzerland, now based in Wilkes County. Longtime MerleFest performers (30 years).

Members of multiple halls of fame: Blue Ridge Music, Wilkes County, International Banjo, and American Folk Music.

Fireside Collective is a high-energy "new grass" / eclectic jam band. Reached #3 on the Billboard Bluegrass Charts in 2020. Blends bluegrass and folk with rock, funk, and original music.

Kitty also spoke on Logistics & Amenities such as Shuttles that will begin at 5:00 PM; pickup locations will be announced later. She also stated that Food trucks will be available on site.

**No Action Taken**

[PRES 26-56](#) 9:30 AM - Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) - EMS Study Presentation

Consultants Terry Rivers and Rhonda Tatum of the Piedmont Triad Regional Council, with project team member Matthew Reese, presented findings from Ashe County's EMS classification, compensation, and organizational study, which aims to create an equitable and competitive structure as the county transitions from contracted EMS service to a county-run department. Their review covered Ashe Medics' current staffing, schedules, deployment practices, and the county's unique service-demand factors, including rural geography, population distribution, tourism surges, and call types. Input was gathered through staff interviews and position questionnaires, with strong support noted from county HR and Ashe Medics leadership. A full implementation and workforce-planning report is expected within one to two weeks, designed with a five- to ten-year sustainability horizon.

The consultants compared Ashe County to eight peer jurisdictions—Alleghany, Surry, Yadkin, Wilkes, Alexander, Caldwell, Avery, and Watauga—while private-sector comparison was limited to Ashe Medics. They emphasized that Ashe County is geographically large but less populated than some peers, yet still experiences significant seasonal demand. Call-volume data from comparison counties was inconsistent, and Watauga's figures were affected by organizational changes. Deployment models across the region vary widely, with Watauga planning to add a fifth base in mid-2026.

County benefits were described as highly competitive, particularly participation in the state retirement system, employer-paid health, dental, and life insurance, and employer-paid retiree health coverage until Medicare eligibility—benefits that significantly exceed typical private-sector offerings. In discussing scheduling, the consultants noted that eight-hour shifts are poorly suited for rural EMS, while twelve-hour shifts can increase fatigue. They identified 24/48 and 24/72 as the most effective rural models, with 24/72 offering better recovery and retention. They recommended a balanced staffing mix of full-time and part-time employees to reduce overtime and emphasized monitoring operational factors such as call density, transport times, crew rest, and station conditions.

Their core recommendation is for Ashe County to establish EMS as a standalone county department and adopt a 24/72 schedule with four ALS units providing 24/7 coverage. This model requires adding a fourth shift and maintaining at least one paramedic per unit. Minimum staffing would require 32 FTEs for line coverage, not including relief factors. The proposed organizational structure includes an EMS Director, training officer, four shift supervisors, senior paramedic/FTO roles, an EMS account specialist, and an optional quick-response vehicle for leadership. They also noted that coordination on river and summer recreation incidents should be developed with fire and rescue agencies.

The pay plan was built using the county's existing structure, Ashe Medics job data, and

market salary information, with proposed titles aligned to county pay grades. While career ladders should exist, the consultants recommended finalizing them after recruitment data clarifies needs. A proposed paramedic minimum salary of \$44,950 was presented, and the board discussed positioning pay at 95%, 100%, or 105% of market depending on recruitment and budget. They encouraged flexibility to offer above minimum starting pay to avoid compression.

A sample staffing model showed 39 total FTEs with a 50% fringe rate, resulting in an estimated annual personnel cost slightly above \$2.7 million, excluding overtime and operating expenses. Billing functions are currently in flux at Ashe Medics, but the consultants believe county call volume supports at least one full-time account specialist, with potential assistance from the tax office for delinquent accounts. Interfacility non-emergency transfers were highlighted as a major operational concern due to their impact on unit availability, and commissioners requested comparison data from neighboring counties. Commissioner discussion strongly favored the 24/72 schedule for its benefits to fatigue, mental health, family stability, retention, and overtime reduction.

**No Action Taken**

[PRES 26-57](#) 9:45 AM - Michael Hartzog, Ashe Harvest Ministries PowerPoint Update

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 Ashe Harvest Ministries Email Request](#)

Reverend Michael Hartzog introduced himself as the Chief Director of Ashe Harvest Ministries, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit led by a board of directors and grounded in a mission to meet basic needs—especially food—while preserving dignity and refusing to “turn a blind eye” to local hardship. He emphasized that real change comes from community action, describing donations as creating “ripple effects” that extend far beyond the moment of giving. The ministry reported supporting 7,630 individuals and 1,942 families, noting significant growth with more than 5,000 families seeking pantry help for the first time since 2022. Ten programs have been launched or implemented, with more details forthcoming, and their outreach has engaged over 7,000 people on social media. In the coming months, five fundraisers are planned, supported by a volunteer base of 60 people who have already logged 5,600 hours this year. Winter assistance included helping 30 families with heating and electric bills totaling \$8,200.25, funded by a group of men from Wilmington who first came to Ashe County during the Helene response and continued their support afterward.

Hartzog shared stories illustrating how help is delivered, including a mobile unit visit to an elderly woman whose freezer had been empty since the Helene storm and another woman recently widowed who relied on the pantry to manage groceries while adjusting to a single retirement income. When asked whether anyone is ever turned away, he said he never denies at least food, though the level of assistance may vary depending on budget constraints. Volunteers, he noted, offer more than groceries—they provide listening, encouragement, and emotional support for people who may not have anyone else to talk to. He also highlighted partnerships such as Hometown Oil in Sparta, which has offered free propane giveaways throughout the winter, with Ashe Harvest Ministries and others contributing funds to help offset costs.

Looking ahead, Hartzog outlined a continued focus on food distribution, TEFAP services, and disaster relief, framed by rising local need. He cited Ashe County's food insecurity rate at 16.2% in 2022 and estimated it may now exceed 20%. Families with children under five face particularly steep challenges, with roughly 31% living in poverty. Additional context included 15.3% of residents living below the federal poverty level in 2023, a

median household income of \$54,589 that he suggested may not reflect local realities, and an average full-time salary of \$38,338. Ashe County is classified as an "economic tier two" community, indicating moderate economic distress, and nearly one in five households spend more than 30% of their income on housing, leaving less available for food. He also referenced Feeding America data showing wide variation in child food insecurity across the Carolinas, noting that while Ashe County is not the highest overall, its child poverty rate remains strikingly high.

**No Action Taken**

**RES 26-4** 10:00 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Resolution Authorizing Participation in the Remnant Defendant Opioid Settlement Agreement & New National Opioid Settlement Information

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 Resolution Authorizing Participation in the Remnant Defendant Opioid Settlement Agreement](#)  
[4-20-2026 New National Opioid Settlement Letter](#)

Adam presented a resolution to add six additional companies to the Opioid Settlement (examples mentioned: North Carolina Mutual Wholesale Drug Company, United Natural Foods), described as including drug wholesalers and online sellers. The additions were framed as likely among the last remaining companies to be included in the settlement. Adam stated the overall settlement figure was \$97.6B. The county's estimated share was described as 0.012% of the total, roughly equating to about \$12,000 paid over 18 years. Adam said that despite the relatively small amount, he emphasized not leaving the funds "on the table" and asked the board to approve the resolution. Commissioner Greene made the motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing Participation in the Remnant Defendant Opioid Settlement Agreement. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval.

**Adopted**

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

**PRES 26-59** 10:15 AM - Patricia Calloway, Executive Director, Generations Ashe

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 Older Americans Month Proclamation May 2026](#)  
[4-20-2026 HCCBGC Members 2026-2027](#)  
[4-20-2026 Request for Third Installment of Approved Contingency Funds](#)

Patricia stated that Generations Ashe is progressing the transition/sale process for its assisted living component while maintaining full operations. Final appraisals are being completed; professional photos have been taken for marketing to potential buyers. Leadership is in discussions with the broker's marketing and sales team. The team met with USDA representatives regarding the current USDA loan and plans to re-amortize the main building loan after the assisted living property sale. Contract staffing at assisted living has steadily decreased, viewed as a positive change for both finances and resident continuity. She said census is hovering around 42-45 residents. Some residents were transitioned to long-term care due to higher care needs; the organization also experienced resident deaths. Vacancies are being filled from the waiting list. Patricia said the Fire suppression system remains an issue; the related drive has been blocked off. Sentry Fire Protection returned to develop a repair plan; Generations Ashe is in their queue and still awaiting repairs. The fix is expected to be extensive and will also require repair of the rear canopy. A daycare-center-serving heat pump failed; replacement cost

was approximately \$6,200. The organization has many heat pumps of similar age, making failures an ongoing risk that must be addressed immediately. A commercial ice maker motor in the kitchen required a replacement part costing \$3,200; the ice maker supports home-delivered meals, congregate nutrition, and both daycare centers. Based on these pressures during the transition, Generations Ashe requested the third installment of approved contingency funding. With a motion made by Commissioner Killen, seconded by Vice Chairman Powers, the board unanimously approved the third payment from the contingency credit line for Generations Ashe. With a motion made by Commissioner Greene seconded by Commissioner Killen the board unanimously approved the proposed Home and Community Care Block Grant committee members for the FY 2026–2027 period. And with a motion made by Commissioner Eldreth, seconded by Vice Chairman Powers the board unanimously approved the May 2026 Older Americans Month proclamation.

**Approved**

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

**PRES 26-60** 10:30 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Landfill Timber Sale RFP Invitation

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 RFP #2026-03 Invitation to Bid on Timber Landfill Tract](#)

Adam stated that there was a pine area at the landfill needs to be cleared before construction starts on the landfill Phase 3. The area below/underneath the pond will be used as a borrow area for dirt material for the third cell. One timber-clearing bid was received for the work. Bid amount was \$27,000 for approximately 8.5 acres. The bid process was confirmed as properly advertised. The bidder indicated they could likely start within 3–4 weeks (they are already in the area and would just need to move equipment). No formal time frame was included in the bid documents, but the start window was discussed and deemed acceptable. Estimated clearing duration was assumed to be no more than about a month if working daily, weather permitting. This timeline would allow Bakers (landfill contractor) to begin other clearing and equipment mobilization in another area. Motion was made by Vice Chairman Powers to accept the bid, seconded by Commissioner Eldreth, and approved by a unanimous vote.

**Approved**

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

**PRES 26-61** 10:40 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Environmental Services DEQ Grant

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 DEQ Grant Letter-Email April 2026 Environmental Services](#)

Scott Hurley, Environmental Services Director shared that a state grant opportunity opened in late October: the HRRI Grant (Helene Recovery Recycling Infrastructure Grant). Eligibility was limited to 33 western North Carolina counties, with up to \$5M per county available to apply for. By late March, the state received over \$122M in requests but only had \$25M total to distribute. Ashe County was awarded \$3M based on the submitted application. The funded purchases will both replace some existing equipment and upgrade other operations/equipment. Scott noted the department met with the budget team and had to redo the budget due to items now covered by the grant. The group discussed making it visible that the new assets are grant-funded to avoid public concern about tax increases. Scott emphasized the grant should save taxpayers money and set

*the county up well for years to come. Scott credited Patty Gambill as essential to the successful grant application, especially in how the request was written and presented. Scott gathered quotes and equipment details; Patty translated the content into effective grant language, which the state cited as a reason for the award level. The chair requested a motion to formally accept the grant money, Commissioner Greene made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Killen and the group called for a vote; members responded all in favor.*

**Approved**

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

### GENERAL SESSION

#### APP 26-2

Reappointment of Josh Roten to WCC Board of Trustees

**Attachments:** [4-20-2026 Request to Reappoint Josh Roten WCC Board of Trustees 2026](#)

*Chairman McNeill stated that a letter was received from Jay Vanoy, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Wilkes Community College. The letter requested the reappointment of Josh Roten to the Wilkes Community College Board of Trustees. The new term would begin July 1, 2026. A motion was made to grant the reappointment request by Vice Chairman Jerry Powers. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene. No discussion was raised. Chairman McNeill called for (in favor / opposed), and the motion carried with Commissioner Eldreth opposing.*

**Appointment(s) Approved**

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

**Against:** 1 - Commissioner Eldreth

#### PRES 26-75

Nick Farmerie, Assistant County Manager & Community Development Director - EDA Grant Agency - Well Dig at the Industrial Park

*Nick stated that the county previously committed (during purchase and zoning of the industrial park property) to strengthen West Jefferson's water system on that side of town by supporting a well. County staff have been working with West Jefferson (Manager Price) on drilling a well at/near the industrial park. A rough sketch was provided showing potential well locations. The northern circled location ("number one") was stated as acceptable to the Town of West Jefferson. There are three additional backup sites identified in the same general area. The sites were selected to avoid impacting developable/buildable industrial park land due to topography; the well sites are not on buildable ground. The well is part of broader utility upgrades including a wastewater treatment plant and a new pump station. Much of the work is expected to be funded through an EDA grant. The EDA grant application requires evidence/commitment that West Jefferson has the right to drill/pump from the well. The current document is time-sensitive and intended to satisfy EDA's requirements; a more formal easement will be brought back later. A motion to approve was made by Vice Chairman Powers, seconded by Commissioner Killen, and approved unanimously.*

**Approved**

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

**VII. Commissioner Comments**

**VIII. Announcements**

**IX. Executive Session**

**X. Adjournment**

*Vice Chairman Powers made a motion to adjourn at 11:36 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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**Todd McNeill, Chairman**

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**Missy Seivers  
Clerk to the Board**