

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, November 18, 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

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

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

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

With the addition of "Personnel" G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) to today's already scheduled Executive Session, Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

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

IV. Consent Agenda

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

Adopted

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

[PRES
24-183](#)

November 4th, 2024 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [11-18-2024 November 4th, 2024 Regular Session Minutes](#)

V. Public Comment

Chairman McNeill opened the floor for public comment at 9:03 am. Judy Bare from Jefferson and Vicki Young from Grassy Creek, both members of the Agricultural Center Advisory Committee came to the podium and spoke on the large amount of debris that is being dumped at the build site for the new AG Center. Judy provided photos of the extremely large piles of debris that included items that were not to be dumped there. She stated that the heavy trucks in & out numerous times a day are damaging the road into the AG Center site. Their concern was also how this could affect construction and grants received for the project. They also asked if there were alternate sites that debris could be taken to other than the build sit for the new AG Center.

At 9:09 am Chairman McNeill closed the floor for public comment.

VI. Presentations

[PRES
24-184](#)

9:00 AM - PUBLIC HEARING - Resolution Approving An Installment Financing Contract & Providing for Certain Other Related Matters (Middle

School)

Attachments: [11-18-2024 Resolution Approving Installment Financing Contract & Providing for Certain Other Related Matters \(Middle School\)](#)

Chairman McNeill opened the public hearing for the Resolution Approving An Installment Financing Contract & Providing for Certain Other Related Matters (Middle School) at 9:14 am. No comments were offered by citizens in attendance. Chairman McNeil closed the public hearing at 9:15 am. Commissioner Sands made the motion to approve the Resolution Approving An Installment Financing Contract & Providing for Certain Other Related Matters (Middle School). 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

PRES
24-185

9:05 AM - PUBLIC HEARING - Michelle Ball, Regional Planner HCCOG - CDBG-NR Grant 19-C-3123 Closeout

Attachments: [11-18-2024 CDBG-NRP Grant 19-C-3123 Closeout Rpt](#)

Chairman McNeill opened the public hearing for the CDBG-NR Grant 19-C-3123 Closeout at 9:23 am. Michelle Ball, Regional Planner HCCOG was present to discuss and answer any questions. No citizens in attendance had a comment for this hearing. At 9:24 am Chairman McNeill closed the public hearing for the CDBG-NR Grant 19-C-3123 Closeout. Commissioner Powers made the motion approving the closeout for the CDBG-NR Grant 19-C-3123. Commissioner Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

PRES
24-186

9:10 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - DSS Statistics September 2024

Attachments: [11-18-2024 DSS Statistics September 2024](#)

Tracie McMillan, DSS Director presented to the Board the DSS Statistics September 2024. These statistics included information on Child Protective Services, Foster Care & Adoptions, Adult Services, Child Support Enforcement and Family Support Services.

PRES
24-188

9:08 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - Request to Modify Position 5310-317-21

Attachments: [11-18-2024 Request to Modify Position 5310-317-21](#)

Tracie McMillan, DSS Director presented to the Board for their approval a Request to Modify Position 5310-317-21. She said in light of the devastating effects of Hurricane Helene on many Ashe County residents, Ashe County DSS has stepped into assist with unmet needs, case management services, short term housing solutions and planning for long term recovery. This additional body of work will be supported in part by some grant positions from NC Works. Overseeing this new unit will require a supervisor to ensure that the work is managed effectively. Tracy requests to convert the position from a SW IAT to a SWS II. This position is a temporary status. She said she doesn't believe she

can attract a good candidate by leaving it in a temporary status. So she's also requesting to change it to the permanent status. Tracie stated that the recovery work is very intense, and she anticipated it to continue for two years or more. There will not be a hard stop, so the plan would be to allow this person to continue in this work until there is a natural stop and then transition to another role in the agency. At that time, Tracie stated she would plan to return to the Board and request it go back to its current designation and status. After some discussion Commissioner Powers made the motion to approve the request to modify Position 5310-317-21. Commissioner Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

[PRES
24-187](#)

9:16 AM - Samantha Oleschuk, Director Florence Thomas Art School - Update on Florence Thomas Art School

Jessa Gerral, Director of Operations and Samantha Oleschuck, Director of Community Engagement with the Florence Thomas Art School presented to the Board an update on the Art School. After the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene and with schools closed, we wanted to provide a safe space for the community. They talked about how they offered coffee, water, and electricity after the storm (Helene) for anyone that may need a place to relax and charge their devices. They offered this from 10am-4pm, and they also offered free drawing stations that they set up for families along with water, coffee, electricity, and free art activities for parents and children during this difficult time. They stated that currently they are in partnership with Ashe County public library and the Ashe County arts council and they are inviting the community to create prayer flags, they have over 300 prayer flags that they are asking local artist in the community to decorate, and these flags will be displayed throughout Lansing to help beautify the devastation and to provide encouragement to residence and visitors. They spoke on many outreach programs providing free art supplies to shut-ins and the elementary school children.

GENERAL SESSION

After the Executive Session meeting adjourned the conference room doors were opened and the public was invited to attend as Commissioners met with Patty Gambill, Emergency Management Coordinator in an open session meeting in the conference room behind the Register of Deeds for an update on Storm Debris Removal. A long discussion took place. Patty discussed water-way and stream debris removal as discussed with the Army Core of Engineers. They discussed SDR, the company currently removing debris in the county. They are also to remove flooded vehicles from the water ways and streams. Ways of disposing with the large piles of debris was discussed such as Curtain Burners for natural debris, etc... More will be known as meetings with the Army Core of Engineers and other entities continues.

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

At 10:17 Chairman McNeill called a recess to move the meeting downstairs to the 2nd floor conference room behind the Register of Deeds office. Vice Chairman Olive made the motion to reconvene at that location at 10:30 am. At which time the Board would go into Executive Session. Commissioner Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

IX. Executive Session

Chairman McNeill called the Executive Session to order at 10:30 am. Vice Chairman Olive made the motion to adjourn Executive Session at 11:17 pm. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

G.S.143-318.11(5) Purchase of Real Property

X. Adjournment

At 12:34 pm Commissioner Powers made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Eldreth 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.

Todd McNeill, Chairman

**Missy Seivers
Clerk to the Board**