

# **Ashe County**

*150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640*



## **Meeting Minutes - Final**

**Monday, December 16, 2024**

**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**

*Chairman McNeill called the December 16th, 2024 Regular Session meeting to order at 9:00 AM.*

**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 Eldreth led the Pledge of Allegiance and Vice Chairman Powers offered the opening Prayer.*

**III. Adoption Of The Agenda**

*Commissioner Greene made the motion to adopt the December 16th, 2024 Agenda. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*  
**Adopted**

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

**IV. Consent Agenda**

*With the removal of the December 2nd, 2024 Minutes for some clarification Commissioner Killen made the motion to adopt the Consent agenda. Vice Chairman Powers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*  
**Adopted**

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

[MIN 24-31](#) December 2nd, 2024 Regular/Organizational Meeting Minutes

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 December 2, 2024 Reg-Org Minutes](#)

[APP 24-15](#) Reappointment of Jak Reeves to the Northwester Regional Housing Authority

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 Northwestern Regional Housing Authority Reappointment Request](#)

[RES 24-7](#) Resolution Removing Appointed Plat Review Officer

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 Resolution Removing Plat Review Officer](#)

**V. Public Comment****VI. Presentations**

[PRES 24-203](#) 9:04 AM - Chris Lambert, Tax Administrator - Monthly Tax Report for November 2024

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 Monthly Tax Report November 2024](#)

Chris Lambert, Tax Administrator presented to the Board for their approval the monthly Tax Report for November 2024. The tax report is usually included in the Consent Agenda but Chris wished to go through it page by page for the new commissioners and answer any questions they might have. Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to approve the November Tax Report. 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**  
**24-204**

9:09 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - DSS Monthly Statistics for October

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 DSS Statistics October 2024](#)

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

**No Action Taken****PRES**  
**24-205**

9:12 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - Delegation of Authority Guide, 25NCAC 011.1900, ASHE DSS Policy-Candidate Qualifications and Candidate Qualification Worksheet

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 Local Government Delegation of Authority Guide](#)

[12-16-2024 25 NCAC 011.1900](#)

[12-16-2024 DSS Services Policy](#)

[12-16-2024 Candidate Qualification Worksheet](#)

Tracie McMillan, DSS Director spoke with Commissioners on the Delegation of Authority Guide, 25NCAC 011.1900, ASHE DSS Policy-Candidate Qualifications and the Candidate Qualification Worksheet. She also presented the Local Government Delegation of Authority Guide for their approval. A lengthy discussion took place as she answered questions from commissioners. After some discussion Commissioner Greene made the motion to approve the Local Government Delegation of Authority Guide. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Approved**

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

**PRES**  
**24-206**

917 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - New Law Regarding Proper Use of Government Networks and Devices

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 NC Criminal Law Blog-Networks-Devices](#)

Tracie McMillan, DSS Director presented to the Board a New Law from the state of North Carolina regarding Pornography on Government Networks and Devices that went into effect October 1, 2024. (S.L. 2024-26) She spoke on how the law applies, how the law defines pornography and exceptions to the prohibitions. Tracy also discussed with

commissioners the requirement for each county to adopt a usage policy. Annual reports are to be sent to the State Chief Information Officer. This is how the state will monitor compliance with the new requirements. Tracie stated this includes all State agencies and offices of the members of the Council of State, Public Agencies, all boards, departments, divisions, constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina, community colleges, and other units of government in the executive branch, units of local government, public authorities and public school units. After a long discussion Commissioner Killen made the motion to implement G.S. 143-805. Commissioner Greene 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](#)  
[24-211](#)

9:19 AM - Tracie McMillan Budget Amendment - Essential Services Funding

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 DSS Budget Amendment](#)

*The following budget amendments were approved upon motion by Vice Chairman Powers, seconded by Commissioner Killen, as provided for by GS 153-127; vote carried unanimously. General Fund: To increase the appropriation for the department of Social Services from \$10,905,090 to \$n,060,301; this increased appropriation of \$155,211 to be made with an appropriation of \$27,859 from Essential Services Funding - Rental Assistance, \$72,266 from Essential Services Funding - Child Welfare, and \$55,086 from Essential Services Funding - Adult Assistance. These funds were made available by the State of North Carolina on 12-3-2024 and deposited into the county account as of 12-13-2024.*

**Approved**

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

[PRES](#)  
[24-207](#)

9:22 AM - Tasha Francis, PIO/Admin ACSO - Body Camera Grant

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 ACSO Body Camera Grant](#)

*Tasha Francis, Administrative Coordinator ACSO and Captain Jeremy Williams presented to the Board a body camera grant awarded to the Ashe county Sheriffs Office from the Small Rural Tribal Body Worn Camera Grant program for acceptance. Tasha explained that the grant awarded is in the amount of \$80,000.00, for the grant funds to be spent on new body cameras, we are requesting commissioners approval for a line item amendment to the equipment line item , 10.4310.490.00 in the amount of \$80,000.00. Commissioner Greene made the motion to increase the appropriation for the department of Law Enforcement from \$4,431,829 to \$4,511,829; this increased appropriation of \$80,000 to be made from a grant award from the Small Rural Tribal Body Worn Camera Grant Program. 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  
24-208](#)

9:25 AM - Caroline Renfro, Chair & CEO Lost Province Center for Cultural Arts - Request /Update

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 Lost Province Center for Cultural Arts - Request](#)

*Caroline Renfro, Chair & CEO of Lost Province Center for Cultural Arts in Lansing presented a request for \$23,757.65 for extensive building repairs and heat installation for their building. She stated that the Lost Province Center for Cultural Arts has served as the main donation distribution center for that area of Ashe County since Hurricane Helene. Heat is needed for the large number of staff that continue to work the donation center and will continue doing so until it is no longer needed. After a lengthy discussion Commissioner Killen made the motion to approve the funding request up to \$24,000 from the contingency fund. Commissioner Eldreth 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  
24-209](#)

9:30 AM - Priscilla Norris, CPA - FY 2023/24 Audit Presentation

*Priscilla Norris, CPA presented to the Board for their approval the FY 2023/24 Audit for Ashe County. She stated that they had audited the financial statements for the County for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2024, and they have issued their report dated November 26, 2024. She said in planning and performing our audit, we considered the County's internal control structure in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements and not to provide assurance on the internal control structure. She stated that during the audit they became aware of several matters that, while not involving material weaknesses in the internal control structure, are opportunities for strengthening this structure and the operating efficiency. She said it does not affect our report on the financial statements of the County. Any material weaknesses, if any, observed are contained in the compliance section of the financial statements. Following a lengthy discussion Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to accept the FY 2023/24 Audit. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

[MISC 24-25](#)

9:35 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Retirement Recognition for Cathy Barr

**Attachments:** [12-16-2024 Cathy Barr](#)

*Adam Stumb, County Manager recognized retiring Economic Development Director Cathy Barr for her more than 10 years of dedicated service as an Ashe County employee. Cathy began her career in September of 2014. Commissioners congratulated her on her retirement, wished her all the luck and all spoke kindly of her time here. She will be missed.*

**No Action Taken**

[PRES  
24-210](#)

9:38 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Approval of Middle School Contract Amendments

*Adam Stumb, County Manager presented to the Board the Middle School Contract Amendments for their approval. He stated the GMP for the Middle School is \$80,366,701.00 which excludes architect fees, furniture, equipment, and finance fees. He stated that we are still at the \$96 million budget, with a comfortable amount of contingency for the project and the finance time is 20 years. He said a motion is needed to approve the contract change order for the Ashe County Middle School. After some discussion Commissioner Killen made the motion to approve the contract change order for the Ashe County Middle School. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

## **GENERAL SESSION**

### **VII. Commissioner Comments**

### **VIII. Announcements**

### **IX. Executive Session**

### **X. Adjournment**

*At 10:30 AM Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to adjourn the December 16th, 2024 Regular Session meeting. 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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