

# Ashe County

*150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640*



## Meeting Minutes - Draft

**Monday, March 16, 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**

*Chairman McNeill called the March 16th, 2026 Regular Session meeting of the Ashe County Board of Commissioners 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 Greene led the Pledge of Allegiance and Chairman McNeill offered the opening Prayer.*

**III. Consent Agenda**

*Commissioner Killen made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Vice Chairman Powers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

[MIN 26-6](#) March 2nd, 2026 Regular Session Minutes

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 March 2, 2026 Regular Session Minutes](#)

[MIN 26-7](#) March 2nd, 2026 Executive Session Minutes

[APP 26-1](#) Local Emergency Planning Committee Reappointments

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Email Requests Reappointments LEPC](#)

[PRES 26-31](#) Badges of Ashe Grounds Use/Statement of Disclaimer Request

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Badges of Ashe Statement of Disclaimer](#)

[PRES 26-32](#) Monthly Tax Report, February 2026

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Monthly Tax Report February 2026](#)

**IV. Adoption of Agenda**

*Commissioner Greene made the motion to adopt the March 16th, 2026 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

**V. Public Comment**

*Chairman McNeill opened the Public Comment portion of today's meeting at 9:02 am.*

Charles Stafford, Fleetwood took the podium and spoke on the tennis courts at Ashe Park. He said that the tennis courts at Ash Park were not originally built to USTA specifications and is about fifteen feet shorter than regulation size. He expressed gratitude for the proposed repair but encouraged building the court to USTA standards for event eligibility and safety reasons. Stafford highlighted ongoing discussions with commissioners and county management about the need to review and possibly modify minimum housing standards, particularly concerning mobile homes and similar structures. Stafford pointed out that votes among commissioners are always unanimous and questioned whether dissent should be more openly accepted.

Richard Calhoun from the Creston community then took the podium to speak. Richard suggested dividing the total cost of solid waste management by the number of houses and businesses to determine a fair fee per household or business. He noted that the tax structure has changed since previous landfill projects, and that this approach had been discussed extensively in the past. He warned that current and future taxation decisions would impact the county's future, especially regarding the ability of young people to own property and remain in the community. Stressed the need to support higher-paying local businesses and provide opportunities for youth to stay and thrive in the area. Encouraged decision-makers to protect family farms, timberland, and the local way of life when considering taxation policies.

Brian Furches, a resident of West Jefferson, addressed the Board to express personal concern regarding the need for a homeless shelter in Ashe County. Brian asked where each member stands on the homeless shelter issue, as he is aware of some positions but not all. He inquired whether there has been any official discussion or consideration regarding a homeless shelter in Ashe County, as mentioned in his email. He shared a personal anecdote about living in Asheville, expressing concern that a homeless shelter there caused more harm than good, and warned of potential negative impacts if one were established in Ashe County.

No further comments were offered by those in attendance. Chairman McNeill then closed the Public Comment portion of today's meeting at 9:11 am.

## VI. Presentations

[PRES 26-33](#) 9:05 AM - PUBLIC HEARING - Landfill and Environmental Services Building Financing -Adam Stumb, County Manager

Chairman McNeill opened the Public Hearing on the Landfill and Environmental Services Building Financing at 9:13 am. He invited anyone in attendance that wished to speak on the matter to come to the podium. No comments were offered by those in attendance. Chairman McNeill then closed the Public Hearing.

[PRES 26-34](#) 9:10 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Approval of Resolution Approving an Installment Financing Contract for Landfill and Environmental Services Building

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Resolution Approving an Installment Financing Contract for Landfill and Environmental Services Building](#)

Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to adopt the Resolution Approving an Installment Financing Contract for Landfill and Environmental Services Building. 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 26-35** 9:13 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Acceptance of Landfill Bid – Baker Construction

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Landfill Bid Municipal Engineering](#)

*Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to accept the Landfill Bid from Baker Construction. 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 26-36** 9:17 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Acceptance of Final GMP for Environmental Service Building (Vannoy Construction)

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Environmental Services GMP](#)

*Commissioner Killen made the motion to approve the acceptance of the Final GMP for Environmental Service Building from Vannoy Construction. 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 26-43** 9:19 AM - Chris Lambert, Tax Administrator - Order the Tax Collector to Advertise 2025 Delinquent Real Property Taxes per NCGS 105-369(a)

*Chris requested to advertise delinquent tax liens in the newspaper. He stated the collection status: 97.97% of original tax levy has been collected. Outstanding delinquent tax amount is \$1,134,477. Delinquent notices and notification of advertisement were mailed on February 1, 2026. Newspaper advertisement will run the first week in April. Commissioner Killen asked the cost of running this ad in the paper. Chris replied the ad is \$1 per name listed. The advertising fee is added directly to each delinquent taxpayer's bill. Chris added that advertising delinquent tax liens is mandated by North Carolina General Statute. Commissioner Killen made the motion to approve the advertising of the delinquent tax liens in the newspaper. Vice Chairman Powers 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 26-42** 9:20 AM - Priscilla Norris, CPA - Amendment to Contract to Audit Accounts

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Amendment to Contract to Audit Accounts](#)

*Priscilla spoke briefly on the Audit Contract and the requested amendment. The Local Government Commission requires the county to have a contract with the*

*individual/company that performs our audit. We missed the end of the contract period by one day and will need to amend the contract to cover that one day. Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to approve contract extension for one day. Vice Chairman Powers 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 26-27** 9:21 AM - Priscilla L. Norris, CPA - FY2024-2025 Audit

*Priscilla began by saying that the Local Government Commission requires the presentation of financial performance indicators generated after audits. She pointed out two compliance failures: use of fund balance for operations (due to hurricane cleanup, to be reimbursed by FEMA) and a late contract submission caused by an ice storm; both issues have already been addressed with the state. No monetary penalties were issued for the compliance failures, but an amended contract may be required. The audit opinion is clean, with no over-budgeted expenditures noted for the year. Following additional financial highlights Commissioner Greene made the motion to accept the 2024/25 Audit. 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 26-28** 9:31 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - DSS Statistics for January 2026 and Ashe County DSS Resolution Letter

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 DSS Statistics January 2026](#)

[3-16-2026 DSS Resolution Letter \(findings& corrections\)](#)

*Tracie began by saying that the Indirect cost plan has been submitted to the state ahead of the April 15th deadline, with all necessary adjustments completed. Early submission and follow-up plan could save the county 25% on income maintenance reimbursements due to recent HR1 changes. Tracy expressed appreciation to the County Finance Department for their efforts in compiling and submitting the required documents. Tracie stated that she was in hopes to complete the next submission by September to maintain eligibility for savings. She spoke on the fiscal monitoring letter which included minor findings: small amounts mis-categorized funds (\$37.39 and \$30.35), which have been corrected. An additional finding regarding travel reimbursement requests was addressed and corrected. No outstanding fiscal findings remain; overall, fiscal management considered strong given the \$10 million budget. She then talked about the Disaster Case Management unit is winding down, with efforts to avoid opening new cases unless in emergencies for verified hurricane survivors. Sixteen disaster case management cases were closed in February. Updates provided on various funding sources: Ashe County Recovery Restoration nonprofit has raised \$384,000+. VOAD grant #1 (NC Emergency Management): \$244,000 for home repairs. United Way: \$75,000 awarded with potential for more if additional needs arise. Corinth Reformed Church continues to support on a per-project basis. Applied for a \$100,000 North Carolina Community Foundation grant, funds not yet spent. VOAD grant #2: \$84,000 for wells and heating/air system replacements. Total of \$926,000 raised for county relief efforts, not including additional direct support from churches and local organizations. Collaborative contributions highlighted, including positive feedback from beneficiaries and acknowledgment of partners like Habitat for Humanity, Baptist on Mission, USDA, Red Cross, Salvation Army, and Nick Farmerie for writing the grants. Tracie also stated that not all donated*

*funds flow through the main organization; some go directly to vendors or services for affected residents.*

**No Action Taken**

**PRES 26-38** 9:40 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Airport Project Design Services Approval – Perimeter Fencing Project

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Work Authorization Airport Perimeter Fencing Project](#)

*Adam spoke on two airport projects: continuation of perimeter fence installation and removal of trees identified as obstructions by the FAA. Both projects are safety-related, aimed at preventing vehicle and wildlife (notably deer) from accessing the airport, and addressing FAA-flagged trees near the runway. Projects are primarily funded through state and FAA grants, requiring only a 10% county match. Avcon Engineering has submitted the proposals for the design work. Board members discussed and quickly moved to approve both proposals. Commissioner Greene made the motion to accept both proposals from Avcon Engineering regarding the airport fencing and tree removal projects. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion passed with majority vote. (Vice Chairman Powers left the meeting momentarily and was not present for the vote.)*

**Approved**

**For:** 4 - Chairperson McNeill, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**Excused:** 1 - Vice Chairman Powers

**PRES 26-39** 9:46 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Airport Project Design Services Approval – Obstruction Removal Project

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Work Authorization Airport Phase 3 Project](#)

*Adam spoke on two airport projects: continuation of perimeter fence installation and removal of trees identified as obstructions by the FAA. Both projects are safety-related, aimed at preventing vehicle and wildlife (notably deer) from accessing the airport, and addressing FAA-flagged trees near the runway. Projects are primarily funded through state and FAA grants, requiring only a 10% county match. Avcon Engineering has submitted the proposals for the design work. Board members discussed and quickly moved to approve both proposals. Commissioner Greene made the motion to accept both proposals from Avcon Engineering regarding the airport fencing and tree removal projects. Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. The motion passed with majority vote. (Vice Chairman Powers left the meeting momentarily and was not present for the vote.)*

**Approved**

**For:** 4 - Chairperson McNeill, Commissioner Eldreth, Commissioner Killen and Commissioner Greene

**Excused:** 1 - Vice Chairman Powers

**PRES 26-40** 9:51 AM - Patricia Calloway, Executive Director Generations Ashe - Update on Generations Ashe

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Generations Ashe Request-Update](#)

*Patricia thanked the group for contingency funding through the fiscal year, which is*

helping Generations Ash meet goals and restructure programs. Families at the assisted living community have been notified of the intent to seek a new owner/operator, and Patricia has been addressing their concerns, including potential changes in fees and care continuity. Generations Ash is working with a marketer and sales rep to find a new owner/operator and feels positive about their approach. The formal appraisal of the facility was delayed due to weather but is scheduled to happen soon. Both the regular operating board and the attorney have reviewed and approved the agreement for contingency funding; the foundation board's approval is pending at a meeting later today. The previously approved \$60,000 for February has not been withdrawn yet; a new \$60,000 allocation for March is being requested to buffer against unpredictable funding, especially delayed Medicaid reimbursements. Monthly financial reports have been provided as required. Patricia also spoke on facility maintenance and repairs. Sprinkler system repairs in the building were more extensive than initially estimated, with deteriorated, brittle Schedule Seven piping needing replacement. The cost for front lower canopy repairs is \$26,451; the upper canopy repairs will be \$15,924, both higher than original worst-case estimates.

The foundation has raised some funds but not enough to fully cover front canopy repairs. Fire marshal has approved starting with front canopy repairs and postponing the upper canopy work to the next fiscal year.

Temporary patchwork on the rear canopy should keep it compliant for now, though full repairs are still needed later. The front canopy sprinkler system is currently out of service and will remain so until repairs are completed. Parking or stopping under the canopy will be restricted to protect the building in case of a vehicle fire. After some discussion Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to approve 2nd allocation of \$60,000. 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

**After a brief recess, the Board will continue their meeting with the Ashe County School Board at 11:00am to consider bids for the Middle School Roof and parking lot repairs at Ashe County High School.**

After a brief recess Chairman McNeill called today's meeting back to order at 11:00 am in the conference room on the 2nd floor of the Ashe County Courthouse behind the Register of Deeds office. The Ashe County School Board were also in attendance.

[PRES 26-37](#) 10:00 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - High School Parking Lot Repair

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Drainage Structure Quote High School](#)

Ashe County Board of Education requests \$27,112.91 from savings on prior chiller project to repair a large sinkhole located at the Ashe County High School, in the bus parking lot. Details provided about size, location, and urgency for safety; motion made by Commissioner Greene and seconded by Commissioner Killen to approve the repair using leftover allocated funds. All were in agreement.

**Approved**

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

[PRES 26-29](#) 10:10 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Middle School Roof

**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Middle School Roof Bid Tabulation Sheet](#)

A lengthy discussion was held between Ashe County Commissioners and the Ashe County Board of Education in regard to replacement of the current Middle School roof. Original lowest roofing bid was withdrawn due to a \$76,000 omission (ceiling tile replacement) discovered after bid submission. Bidder withdrawal due to substantial mathematical error, as allowed by statute, to prevent legal complications and ensure all work is covered. Next lowest bidder (BAR Roofing and Maintenance) attended all pre-bid meetings and was thorough in scope understanding; bid checked and all requirements met. Total project cost for roof (including 5% contingency and engineering) is \$2,216,170. County commissioners and school board members debated cost sharing with the historical commitment being half the roof cost from the school board, but total project cost are now much higher than previous estimates. Concerns raised over fund balances, future capital needs, and prioritizing projects (e.g., roof, boilers, water project at Westwood). Commissioner Greene made the motion that the County would pay half of the cost to replace the roof on the current Middle School. Commissioner Eldreth seconded the motion. All were in agreement. Commissioners agreed that the roof replacement does need to take place this summer. Discussion continued with School Board members inquiring as to how the building would be used when the county takes it over in future years. Chairman McNeill stated plainly that Ashe County Parks & Recreation would have a presence there. Other possible uses could include an EMS base, health clinic, DSS satellite office, or childcare. Commissioners also stated that the community in that area would also be asked for their input. At the end of the meeting the School Board tabled their discussion on their portion of the roof funding until more information is available regarding fund reallocations. Stating they would reconvene today at 1:30 pm in closed session.

**Approved**

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

**[PRES 26-30](#)** 10:15 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Retirement Recognition for Brenda Miles**Attachments:** [3-16-2026 Service Info-Brenda Miles](#)

Everyone expressed gratitude and admiration for Brenda Miles as she retires. Brenda is exceptionally kind, gracious, and professional, consistently positive with both staff and the public. Several referenced tenure, work across different departments, and impact on colleagues. Her transition from the planning department and part-time roles to her current position was mentioned. Brenda's positive attitude and helpfulness were praised by colleagues who have worked with her for varying lengths of time. Everyone wished Brenda well as she moves on to spend more time with family and grandchildren, noting she will be greatly missed.

**GENERAL SESSION****VII. Commissioner Comments****VIII. Announcements****IX. Executive Session**

ES 26-7

## G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) Legal

*Chairman McNeill asked if there was any other business or action needed for the board. Commissioner Greene made the motion to approve a settlement with Appalachian Materials for \$400,000. Motion included allowing staff to carry out settlement terms and authorizing the county manager to sign on behalf of the county. 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

**X. Adjournment**

*At 11:54 am Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to adjourn the March 16th, 2026 Regular Session Meeting of the Ashe County Board of Commissioners. 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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