

Ashe County

150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, November 4, 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

Commissioner Eldreth led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Powers offered the opening prayer.

III. Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to adopt the November 4th, 2024 agenda. Vice Chairman Olive 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

Commissioner Sands made the motion to approve the consent agenda for November 4th, 2024. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

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

[MIN 24-28](#) October 21st, 2024 Regular Session Minutes

[MIN 24-29](#) October 21st, 2024 Executive Session Minutes

[APP 24-13](#) Reappointment of Zeb Gambill to West Jefferson ETJ Board

V. Public Comment**VI. Presentations**

[PRES 24-181](#) 9:05 AM - Mack Powers, Mayor of Lansing - Update/Discussion

Mayor of Lansing, Mack Powers gave an update on the recovery efforts in Lansing following Hurricane Helene on September 27th, 2024. He talked about an organized group of volunteers/professionals called "Lansing Bridges to Recovery", that are replacing bridges and culverts in the area. He said they have completed 53 projects in the area and have been contacted in regard to 210 projects. Mack spoke in length about the strength of Ashe County citizens. He stated that to his knowledge all Lansing businesses are going to reopen.

[PRES 24-179](#) 9:08 AM - Caroline Renfro, Chair/CEO Lost Province Center for Cultural Arts - Request for County Funding/Donation Center

Attachments: [Request From Caroline Renfro](#)

Caroline Renfro, Chair/CEO Lost Province Center for Cultural Arts was present today to request funds to assist in preparing their building for winter and cost of heating. She stated that LPCCA is currently operating as a donation center for the town of Lansing and neighboring communities and we have a need for county funding. She stated that the Town of Lansing had committed \$10,000 for their need and she asked that the county match that amount. After some discussion Chairman McNeill asked that she complete a written request including a budget sheet and return that to the County Finance Office.

No Action Taken

[PRES 24-175](#) 9:14 AM - Missy Parker, Veterans Services - Veterans Day Update

Missy Parker, Veterans Services presented the Board with a Veterans Day Update. She also announced that the Veterans Day Celebration will be held on Monday November 11th, 2024 from 9:00 am until noon at the Ashe Arts Council. Missy stated that representatives from the VFW, DAV, American Legion and the Marine Corps League will be attending and that refreshments would be provided and door prizes awarded for those in attendance. Missy also spoke on the number of veterans growing each week in Ashe County saying that she's getting one or two new veterans, either retirees coming here or newly transitioned off active duty. These that are younger, they like the slower lifestyle climate and it's such a beautiful area and they say people here in Ashe County are nice. She said of the approximate 1600 veterans in the county over 900 are now receiving benefits that's up about 200 from when she began.

[PRES 24-176](#) 9:17 AM - Pam Barlow, Clerk of Courts - Introduction of Sherman Lee

Pam Barlow, Clerk of Courts was present today to introduce Sherman Lee who will be fulfilling her term as Clerk of Superior Court effective December 1, 2024.

[PRES 24-177](#) 9:20 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - Acceptance of the \$25,000 Grant from Cumberland Community Foundation, Inc. & Award a Special \$25,000 Grant to Ashe County Recovery and Restoration

Attachments: [11-4-2024 Resolution Accepting Grant from Cumberland Community Foundation](#)

Tracie McMillan, DSS Director was seeking approval today from the Board for the acceptance of a \$25,000 Grant from Cumberland Community Foundation, Inc. & approval to award a Special \$25,000 Grant to Ashe County Recovery and Restoration. Tracie stated that approval was not necessary from the Board as initially thought. At the time the IRS determination letter had not yet been received since putting this on the agenda that IRS determination letter has been received. Ashe County Recovery and Restoration is officially a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization. No action needed.

No Action Taken

[PRO 24-5](#) 9:25 AM - Tracie McMillan, DSS Director - Adoption Awareness Month Proclamation

Attachments: [11-4-2024 Proclamation Adoption Awareness Month 2024](#)

Tracie McMillan, DSS Director along with Tori Logel and Ed Hurst presented to the Board the Adoption Awareness Month Proclamation. Tori read the proclamation. Commissioner Powers made the motion to approve the Adoption Awareness Month Proclamation. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

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

RES 24-5 9:30 AM - Andrew Cole, Museum of Ashe County History - Resolution of Ashe County Recognizing and Approving of the Ashe County Official America 250 NC Committee

Attachments: [11-4-2024 Resolution Official America 250 NC Committee](#)

Andrew Cole, Museum of Ashe County History along with Pete Eller, Mayor of Jefferson and Samantha Oleschuk, Director of Community Engagement for the Florence Thomas Art School presented to the Board the Resolution of Ashe County Recognizing and Approving of the Ashe County Official America 250 NC Committee for approval. After some discussion Commissioner Sands made the motion to approve the Resolution of Ashe County Recognizing and Approving of the Ashe County Official America 250 NC Committee. 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

PRO 24-6 9:36 AM - Mary Bohlen, Daniel Boone Chapter, DAR - National American Indian Heritage Month Proclamation

Attachments: [11-4-2024 Proclamation National American Indian Heritage Month](#)

Mary Bohlen with the American Indian Committee of the Daniel Boone Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution stated she wishes to recognize Native American Heritage Month in November by asking Ashe County Commissioners to sign a Proclamation. She then read the proclamation. After some discussion Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to adopt the Native American Heritage Month Proclamation. Vice Chairman Olive 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 24-180 9:41 AM - Lynn Rutter, MSN, FNP-C - Funding Request for Lansing Family Health & Wellness

Attachments: [11-4-2024 Request From Lynn Rutter-Proposed Lansing Family Health & Wellness](#)

Lynn Rutter, MSN, FNP-C presented the Board with a funding request for the proposed Lansing Family Health & Wellness. She requested \$25,000 from the county to assist in establishing Lansing Family Health and Wellness. She also stated that they are a registered 501(c)(3) and would appreciate the counties support. After some discussion Chairman McNeill asked that she complete a written request including their budget

information and return that to the County Finance Office.

No Action Taken

PRES
24-182

9:46 AM - Jordan Sellers, Northern Peaks State Trail Coordinator with Blue Ridge Conservancy - Update on Paddy Mountain Park

Jordan Sellers, Northern Peaks State Trail Coordinator with Blue Ridge Conservancy gave an update on Paddy Mountain Park and then asked for the Board's approval on proposed trail names. He stated that they sustained some damage from the storm, but it ended up being much less than they thought. He said the first time he went out there it was covered in trees, but that after a couple weeks of cutting trees up and having a big volunteer day on October 19th with many members of the community and Appalachian State they got everything cleared up. Jordan stated the trails are looking good, the parking lot, the buildings and the paving should be starting today and we have not run over budget. It's coming together with trash cans and signs and all those fun things, but it should be ready for everyone in the near future. He stated that they were fortunate to receive a grant to help us pay for trash cans, and Ashe County Rotary also contributed to help pay for our signs so this continues to be a community effort. Jordan said in regard to the trail names, we've got about a mile which takes you from the parking lot to the lower loop. We would just call that portion the Northern Peak State Trail. The lower loop we would name the "Shagbark Hickory Loop" due to the high number of shagbark hickories that are out there. The upper loop we would name the "Cohosh Loop" and that would be after the Black and Blue Cohosh that grows there. That is a spring wildflower that is very common out there and not common at all elsewhere. Jordan stated that if the commissioners had any comments or questions or thoughts on that, he would welcome them. He also stated that he will also be taking this to the town of West Jefferson to get their approval. Commissioner Powers made the motion to approve the trail names. 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

RES 24-6

9:55 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Funding Resolution for Proposed Middle School

Attachments: [11-4-2024 Funding Resolution for Proposed Middle School](#)

Adam Stumb, County Manager presented to the Board the Funding Resolution for Proposed Middle School. He stated that this resolution is one of the first steps needed to begin the financing of the new Ashe Middle School. He said the resolution calls for a public hearing at the next Board meeting. and that it also sets the "not-to-exceed" amount for financing. The amount set in the resolution is \$47 million. This amount is higher than the \$96 million approved prior by the Board, however we have to set an amount higher to cover the bids that will come in on 11/7. Adam said the difference allows the Board to consider a higher bid, if no other options are available. This is strictly a time problem because this resolution has to be approved prior to the bids coming in, as well as giving time to advertise the public hearing. Adam said this does not require the Board to spend any more than the previously approved \$96 million. After a lengthy discussion that also included Sandy Long, Finance Officer for the County, Commissioner Powers made the motion to approve the resolution setting the "not-to-exceed" finance amount at \$47 million and to set the public hearing for financing to November 18th. Commissioner Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

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

GENERAL SESSION

Prior to Commissioner Comments Chairman McNeil allowed a late Public Comment from John Longo from the Fleetwood area to come to the podium for comment. Mr. Longo stated the he spent 24 years in the military 15 in the Middle East. He said he had an organization with Catherine Massy and that they do Compassionate Commissary. He stated that throughout this whole meeting what he was hearing is that people need money and that issue was a little over his head. He stated that they were able to help people with generators. He stated he also had a position Samaritan's Purse and was in Puerto Rico during a disaster and he had seen people die that we're up in the mountains a month after the disaster because they couldn't get access to things they needed. He stated that sometimes we have short term memories but said he felt as if everyone summed it up really good of what was needed. He also said not to blame FEMA but everyone seems to want credit for things and they are asking for money to get the things done. He stated that in the military they communicated with each other and that communication is vital. He said he was praying that we come together as a as a community. He said he had lived here about 25 years and he just feels the need to help and if he could do one thing for somebody he was good on that. He stated that the needs are great and he knew the commissioners had a lot on them.

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

IX. Executive Session

X. Adjournment

At 11:10 am Commissioner Powers made the motion to adjourn. 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

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