

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, July 6, 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 July 6th, 2026 Regular Session 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 Killen led the Pledge of Allegiance and Vice Chairman Powers offered the Opening Prayer.

III. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Greene made the motion to approve 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

[MIN 26-15](#) June 1, 2026 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [07-01-2026 June 1, 2026 Minutes](#)

[MIN 26-16](#) June 1, 2026 Public Hearing Minutes

Attachments: [07-06-2026 June 1, 2026 Public Hearing Minutes](#)

[MIN 26-17](#) June 8, 2026 Public Hearing Minutes

Attachments: [07-06-2026 June 8, 2026 Public Hearing Minutes](#)

[MIN 26-18](#) June 15, 2026 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [07-06-2026 June 15, 2026 Minutes](#)

[MIN 26-20](#) June 19, 2026 Special Budget Session w/ACSO Minutes

Attachments: [07-06-2026 June 19, 2026 Minutes with ACSO](#)

[MISC 26-19](#) Resignation of Phyllis Ashley from the Long Term Care Advisory Committee

Attachments: [07-06-2026 Phyllis Ashley Resignation](#)

[APP 26-7](#) Local Emergency Planning Committee Appointments

[MISC 26-20](#) Appalachian State University Lease Agreement

Attachments: [07-06-2026 Appalachian State University Lease 2026](#)

APP 26-5 Planning Board Reappointment of David Phipps

Attachments: [07-06-2025 Planning Board Member app & Letters of Support](#)

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to adopt the 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 floor for the Public Comment portion of today's meeting at 9:02 am.

Richard Calhoun provided the first public comment, opening with a patriotic sentiment regarding the country's 250th anniversary and thanking Jerry for the prayer provided earlier. He complimented the commissioners on their management of the budgetary process, acknowledging that budgets are inherently difficult to manage. He expressed his appreciation for the board looking out for taxpayers, specifically citing long-term families who have resided in the county for multiple generations. He commended the board for exercising control and "putting their foot down" to prevent the budget from getting out of hand, thanking them for their service to the community.

No other comments were offered by those in attendance. Chairman McNeill closed the Public Comment portion of the meeting at 9:04 am.

VI. Presentations

PRES
26-104

9:04 AM - Patty Gambill. Emergency Management Director - Budget Amendment

Attachments: [07-06-2026 Public Buildings Budget Amendment](#)

Patty presented a request for a \$552,090 budget amendment specifically dedicated to Riverview projects. The planned work includes HVAC electrical design and installation, the installation of electrical conduits, and the purchase and installation of insulation and ceiling tiles. A portion of the funds will be used to repair outside septic lines at the facility. Chairman McNeill noted that because these projects will not start until after July 1, 2026, the funds must be re-budgeted for the appropriate fiscal year. The \$552,090 total is drawn from two primary sources: insurance/FEMA reimbursements and a state grant. \$445,772 is allocated from the general fund balance, representing unspent insurance and FEMA money from fiscal year 2025-2026 related to previous center damages. \$106,318 comes from an Office of State Budget and Management (OSMB) grant awarded on January 13, 2026. The overall appropriation for the Department of Public Buildings was increased from \$3,226,177 to a new total of \$3,778,267. Commissioner Eldreth moved to approve the motion to increase the appropriation and accept the budget amendment as presented. Vice Chairman Powers seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Approved

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

**PRES
26-105**

9:06 AM - Eric Hiegl, Senior Director of Land Protection & Conservation Planning, Blue Ridge Conservancy - Blue Ridge Parkway Land Dedication

Attachments: [07-06-2026 Letter of Support, Land Resource Program, Map BRP](#)

Eric Hiegl from the Blue Ridge Conservancy presented a plan regarding 121 acres of land recently acquired off the Blue Ridge Parkway, located below the Jumping Off Rocks Overlook. Approximately 55.31 acres of this property are situated in Ashe County, with the remainder in Wilkes County. The Conservancy intends to donate this land to the National Park Service to be integrated into the Blue Ridge Parkway, a move intended primarily for view shed protection. Eric noted that the land is "scarped," meaning it is likely unsuitable for hiking trails but valuable for preserving the landscape visible from the overlook. Commissioner Greene made the motion to approve the plan. Seconded by Commissioner Eldreth. The board unanimously approved a motion to provide a letter of support for this land dedication, following a similar approval already granted by Wilkes County.

Approved

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

PRO 26-3

9:15 AM - Jordan Sellers, Northern Peaks State Trail Director, Blue Ridge Conservancy - Blue Ridge Conservancy Trails Month Proclamation

Jordan Sellers, also with the Blue Ridge Conservancy, requested and received approval for a proclamation declaring July as "Blue Ridge Conservancy Trails Month." During July, the Conservancy is partnering with local businesses in Ashe and Watauga Counties for a "roundup" fundraising campaign to support the Northern Peaks State Trail and the North Fork Greenway. Jordan explained that funds raised through these local efforts will serve as matching funds for state and federal grants pursued for these trail projects. Commissioner Greene made the motion to adopt the proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Killen. The board unanimously adopted the proclamation to encourage community participation in the fundraising efforts.

Adopted

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

RES 26-9

9:25 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Deep Ford River Access Sponsorship Resolution

Attachments: [7-06-2026 Resolution Water Resources Development Grant](#)

Adam presented a request for the county to sponsor a North Carolina Water Resources grant application for the Deep Fork river access property purchased last year. Because the property is scheduled to transfer to county ownership within the next month, the county will act as the primary applicant for the grant.

The grant funding is intended for river access improvements and stream bank restoration, though Adam noted that the terrain's elevation and flood way status will limit intensive construction. There was a brief discussion regarding the potential for tent camping at the site; while not currently in the plan, the board expressed interest in the

idea after seeing similar improvements in the town of Lansing. Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to adopt the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Killen. The board unanimously approved the resolution of sponsorship to allow the application process to move forward.

Adopted

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

RES 26-10

9:30 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Resolution Directing Expenditure of Funds FY 2025-26

Attachments: [07-06-2026 Amendmended2 5-26 Resolution to Direct the Expenditure of Opioid Settlement Funds](#)

Keisha Maldonado, the new Opioid Settlement Coordinator with APPHealth Care, introduced two resolutions regarding the distribution of settlement funds. The first was a technical amendment for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to extend funding dates to July 5, 2026, to prevent any gaps, and to update the Sheriff's office project description to include support for evidence-based addiction treatment. Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. All were in agreement.

Adopted

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

RES 26-11

9:40 AM - Adam Stumb, County Manager - Resolution Directing Expenditure of Funds FY 2026-27

Attachments: [07-06-2026 Resolution to Direct the Expenditure of Opioid Settlement Funds](#)

The second resolution established a three-year funding cycle for 2026 through 2029 to manage the expected annual decreases in state settlement disbursements. Keisha confirmed that while the funding model is moving to a three-year distribution plan, the specific strategies and service delivery sites remain the same as previous years. Commissioner Killen made the motion to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Greene seconded the motion. All were in agreement.

Adopted

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

MISC 26-21

ADD-ON: Chris Lambert, Tax Administrator - Late Tax Exclusion Application

Chris presented an application for a disabled veterans tax exclusion that was submitted after the June 1st deadline. The board moved to deny the application for the current year due to the missed deadline but noted the applicant is welcome to re-apply for the following year starting January 1st. Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to deny, seconded by Commissioner Greene. All were in agreement.

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**

*An Executive Session was add to today's meeting to discuss "Property" G.S. 143.
-318.11(5) The session began at 10:00 am and ended at 10:49 am.*

X. Adjournment

*Commissioner Greene made the motion to adjourn Executive Session at 10:49 am.
Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. All were in agreement.*

*Vice Chairman Powers made the motion to adjourn today's meeting at 10:49 am.
Commissioner Killen seconded the motion. All were in agreement.*

Approved

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

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.