

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, April 3, 2017

8:30 AM

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

*Chairman William Sands
Vice Chair Paula Perry
Commissioner Jeff Rose
Commissioner Gary Roark
Commissioner Larry Rhodes*

WORK SESSION - 8:30 AM

Chairman Sands called the Work Session to order at 8:30 a.m. in the commissioners' meeting room at the Ashe County Courthouse.

Chairman Sands stated that a review of applications received for the Tax Administrator position will be held in Executive Session today. An interview of applicants will be held on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

Chairman Sands told the Board that the County paid off the loan on the Family Central building on March 28, 2017. He believes rental space pricing needs to remain reasonable because the majority of renters are non-profit organizations.

Chairman Sands explained that three commissioners attended a luncheon and toured the Ashe Services for Aging facility after the last Board meeting held on the 20th of March. Ashe Services for Aging needs to replace their kitchen equipment due to the age of the equipment. He suggested the Board consider donating the kitchen equipment at Family Central to Ashe Services for Aging since it is not being used. Board members discussed the suggestion and agreed to have representatives from Ashe Services for Aging look at the kitchen equipment at Family Central.

Next, Chairman Sands reviewed items on the agenda.

County Manager Sam Yearick recommended the commissioners appropriate \$1000 to assist with payment of drivers of the shuttle buses for the Mt. Jefferson Downhill Race. Consideration can be made during this year's budget work sessions to add a line item in the Economic Development tourism budget for a yearly appropriation.

County Manager Sam Yearick recommended funds be appropriated from the Economic Development budget for the Caboose project in West Jefferson. If the group can wait for funding until July, funds can be appropriated from Occupancy Tax monies.

County Manager Sam Yearick believes funding for updates to the Ashe County communications system needs to be discussed during budget work sessions due to the costs associated with the project. Monies would need to be appropriated from the General Fund.

County Manager Yearick updated the Board on prior action taken by the Board regarding the Combs property and a request that will be made by Gabe Miller during the meeting today.

The county manager told the Board that the contract between the County and the Department of Motor Vehicles for the County to run the tag office is up for renewal. The new contract is for an eight-year time period.

With no further discussion, Chairman Sands closed the Work Session.

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

Chairman Sands called the meeting of the Ashe County Board of Commissioners to order at 9:00 a.m. on April 3, 2017 at the Ashe County Courthouse.

Present: 5 - Commissioner Jeff Rose, Commissioner Larry Rhodes, Commissioner William Sands, Commissioner Gary Roark and Commissioner Paula Perry

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer

Vice Chairman Perry led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Rhodes offered the opening prayer.

III. Approval of Minutes

MIN 17-15 February 20, 2017 Executive Session Minutes

Commissioner Rose made a motion to approve the February 20, 2017 Executive Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Rhodes seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

MIN 17-16 March 20, 2017 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [04-03-17 March 20, 2017 Regular Session Minutes](#)

Commissioner Rose made a motion to approve the March 20, 2017 Regular Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Rhodes seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

MIN 17-17 March 20, 2017 Executive Session Minutes

Commissioner Rose made a motion to approve the March 20, 2017 Executive Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Rhodes seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Rose seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

V. Public Comment

Chairman Sands opened the floor for Public Comment. No comment was offered.

VI. Presentations

PRES 17-28 DSS Director Tracie McMillan - Request to Change Administrative Officer Position from Grade 73 to Grade 69

Attachments: [04-03-17 DSS Request to Change Adm Officer Position Pay Grade](#)

Department of Social Services Director Tracie McMillan requested that the Board approve the change of the Administrative Officer position from grade 73 to grade 69. She explained that the position is currently at grade 73 and the position has been vacated due to retirement. The State Personnel Regulations have the position listed as a grade 67. County Personnel Regulations add two grades to a position. Therefore, a request is being made to reclassify the position to Grade 69 and to be allowed to advertise the position. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the request as presented. Commissioner Roark seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

PRES 17-24 Michael Sexton - Sharing Center Annual Report

Attachments: [04-03-17 Sharing Center Annual Report](#)

Michael Sexton with the Ashe Sharing Center introduced members of the Sharing Center's executive board. He explained that the Sharing Center is now able to offer all five of their programs under one roof since the County allowed them to lease a building last year. He told the Board that the Sharing Center gave away 380,000 pounds of food last year. They give away close to 25,000 pounds of produce each month. Mr. Sexton listed improvements made to the Sharing Center since last year which include improvements to the parking lot, the roof, the addition of heat pumps, kitchen renovations, classroom renovations, replacement of windows and a door, improvements to the exterior wall, and the addition of signage. All of these items were paid for with monies received from grants. The Sharing Center also provides a mobile pantry in Creston and Lansing. Mr. Sexton thanked the Board for allowing the Sharing Center to lease the building from the County.

PRES 17-25 Park Superintendent Joseph Shimel - Annual Mount Jefferson Downhill Race

Attachments: [04-03-17 Annual Mount Jefferson Downhill Race](#)

Park Superintendent Joseph Shimel updated the Board on the upcoming Mt. Jefferson Downhill Race. This year will be the third annual event which has been increased to three days with the addition of activities for Friday. Last year there were 89 registered riders and 1000 spectators in attendance. Riders come from across the United States and from Canada, the Virgin Islands, and China. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to appropriate \$1000 for the Mt. Jefferson Downhill Race. Commissioner Rose seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

PRES 17-26 David Blackburn and Emily Mosely - Ashe County Middle School Health Based Center Annual Report

The annual report for the Ashe County Middle School Health Based Center was provided through a PowerPoint presentation. David Blackburn introduced board members

present. He highlighted the mission and vision statements of the Center. Mr. Blackburn told the Board that Ashe County has the only Center in North Carolina that has its own building which is owned by the Board of Education. Free medical services are provided for all middle school students. The County provides \$40,000 funding each year for the Center. Their goal is to have financial stability and to one day be able to build a second Health Based Center at the High School. Emily Mosely, manager for the clinic, told the Board that they operate the same as a full service doctor's office. Services offered include depression screening and nutrition counseling. There are 429 students enrolled at the Health Center out of a total enrollment of 456 students at the middle school. Faculty and staff are also served at the Center. Ms. Mosely provided patient insurance status statistics. There were 1061 visits to the Center so far this school year. Beth Lovette explained that the School Health Based Center is a program of the Appalachian District Health Department. She highlighted the proposed 2017-2018 budget and anticipates the need to dip into the Fund Balance for over \$26,000. Several students addressed the Board regarding benefits of the Center. Elaine Cox, assistant principal of Ashe County Middle School, thanked the Board for their support and spoke to the importance of the clinic to middle school students. Nancy Kautz spoke to the impact that the Center has had on suicide in the County. Ashe County used to be the top county in the state for suicides. We have moved down in rank to 48th in the state.

PRES 17-27 Andy Guion - Request for Funding for Norfolk and Western Caboose Project

Attachments: [04-03-17 Request for Funding for Norfolk and Western Caboose Project](#)

Dale Carlson, on behalf of the Ashe County Historical Society and as a member of the Caboose Committee, presented information and a request for funding on the Norfolk and Western Caboose Project. Mr. Carlson told the Board that he is also representing the Ashe County Chamber of Commerce and the West Jefferson Business Association. The caboose is presently located in Bristol. The group believes the caboose would be a good tourist attraction for Ashe County and West Jefferson. It would also be a reminder of the county's railroad heritage from the Virginia Creeper Trail. Mr. Carlson explained the cost to purchase the caboose is \$16,500 and the estimated cost to renovate and relocate it would be between \$13,000 - \$15,000. There has been good community fundraising efforts and the request being made today is for the commissioners to provide support between \$3000 - \$5000 for the project. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to match the appropriation made by the Town of West Jefferson in the amount of \$3000 to be appropriated from the Economic Development fund. Commissioner Rose seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

PRES 17-29 Patty Gambill & Phil Howell - Communications System Update & Proposal

Attachments: [04-03-17 Communications System Upgrade and Proposal](#)

Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill told the Board that the County has an opportunity to partner with the State on a new communications tower in the northwest end of the county which will increase coverage in the area. The State has funding available for the construction of the tower if the County can purchase or lease a site. Once the site is selected, the Board will need to approve to negotiate with the landowner for the lease or purchase of the property. The State will sublease at no cost to them in exchange for tower space for communications equipment. A request is being included in

the budget for \$543,375 for a new communications system and \$141,524 for communications equipment at the site mentioned. The current communications system was installed in 2006. There have been issues with the equipment within the last few years. Phil Howell, director of communications, talked about the communication systems. There are currently three primary sites. He explained a scenario that took place in October 2016 when the County's VHS system went down. First responders also addressed issues they have been experiencing with the current communications system and the need for an improved system. Wireless representatives explained that they have been working on the system for two years. Some of the components used in the current system are not manufactured anymore. They believe adding a fourth tower in the Creston area is critical for the communications system. Improvements to the current system would be made in two phases with the first phase being an upgrade in the current three sites and the second phase being the addition of a tower in the Creston area. Commissioner Rhodes then made a motion to pursue negotiations with a potential landowner for a new tower site. Commissioner Rose seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

PRES 17-30 County Manager Sam Yearick - Amendment to Combs Property Agreement

Attachments: [04-03-17 Amendment to Combs Property Agreement](#)

County Attorney John Kilby told the Board that a visit was made to the Combs property by the county manager, county attorney, and County Commissioner Gary Roark. Gabe and Florence Miller inherited the property and they want to complete clean up of all the property. The Millers would also like to clean up the Billie Hall (RJ Combs' sister) property. The County has a judgement against the RJ Combs' property. The Millers would like to be allowed to leave the camper on the property. They are also requesting 24 months to get the property cleaned up. The property is to remain clean for an additional 24 months and then the County will release the judgement. Property taxes need to be brought current and then kept current. Commissioner Rhodes questioned how action taken now would affect action the commissioners took in 2016 regarding this issue. County Attorney Kilby answered that today's action would be an amendment to the previous action. County Manager Yearick stated that the request is to modify the previous agreement as stated by the county attorney. Commissioner Rose made a motion to draft a proposed amendment to the original agreement as verbally outlined and present it to Gabe and Florence Miller for approval and the Board of Commissioners for final approval. The motion passed with Commissioners Sands, Perry, Roark, and Rose voting in favor of the motion. Commissioner Rhodes did not vote which will be recorded as a vote in the affirmative.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

PRES 17-31 Planning Director Adam Stumb - Outdoor Recreation Summit

Attachments: [04-03-17 Outdoor Recreation Summit](#)

Planning Director Adam Stumb told the Board about the Outdoor Recreation Summit event that will be held on May 4th to unveil work done by Destination by Design on the

Northern Peaks Trail. The New River Conservancy and the Blue Ridge Conservancy will be there to show work they have done with outdoor recreation. Hopes are to have citizens talk about outdoor recreation opportunities and challenges.

PRES 17-32 County Manager Sam Yearick - Request for Approval of DMV Contract

Attachments: [04-03-17 Request for Approval of DMV Contract](#)

County Manager Sam Yearick presented a request for the Board to approve the renewal of a contract between the County and the State for the County to operate the License Plate Agency. The contract runs from March 2017 through March 2025. Commissioner Rose made a motion to approve the License Plate Agency contract as presented. Commissioner Rhodes seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

GENERAL SESSION

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

IX. Executive Session

ES 17-5 Executive Session - G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6) - Personnel Issues

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Personnel Issues pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6). Commissioner Rose seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Chairman Sands declared the Board into Executive Session at approximately 10:47 a.m. Commissioner Rose made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 11:40 a.m. Vice Chairman Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Roark made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:41 a.m. Vice Chairman Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Rose, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Roark and Commissioner Perry

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.