

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, March 18, 2019

9:00 AM

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

*Chairperson Todd McNeill
Vice Chair William Sands
Commissioner Larry Rhodes
Commissioner Paula Perry
Commissioner Larry Dix*

BUSINESS SESSION

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

Chairman McNeill called the Regular Meeting of the Ashe County Board of Commissioners to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Ashe County Courthouse.

Present: 4 - Commissioner Todd McNeill, Commissioner William Sands, Commissioner Larry Rhodes and Commissioner Larry Dix

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Paula Perry

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer

Vice Chairman Sands led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Dix offered the opening prayer.

III. Approval of Minutes

MIN 19-1 March 4, 2019 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [03-18-19 March 4, 2019 Regular Session Minutes](#)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the March 4, 2019 Regular Session Minutes as written. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

MIN 19-2 March 4, 2019 Work Session Minutes

Attachments: [03-18-19 March 4, 2019 Work Session](#)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the March 4, 2019 Work Session Minutes as written. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to delete PRES 19-61 Sheriff Phil Howell - Request for Maintenance Employee to be Assigned to the Sheriff's Office. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.
Adopted

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

V. Public Comment

Chairman McNeill opened the floor for comments from the public. No comment was

offered.

VI. Presentations

[PRES 19-48](#) Tax Administrator Chris Lambert-Employee Recognition-Theresa G. Moore

Attachments: [03-18-19 Employee Recognition](#)

[PRES 19-49](#) Commissioner Larry Dix-Recognition of Ashe County High School State Champions and Athletic Director

Attachments: [03-18-19 State Champions Recognition](#)

[PRES 19-50](#) Joallen Lowder and Steve Scott - Ashe County Schools Career & Technical Education Programs

Attachments: [03-18-19 Ashe County Schools CTE Program](#)

Joallen Lowder, director of Accountability & Testing with Ashe County Schools, and Career Development Coordinator Steven Scott, made a presentation to the Board on the Ashe County Schools Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program. Joallen Lowder provided information on the program stating that the mission of CTE is to empower students to be successful citizens, workers, and leaders in a global economy. She also highlighted participation statistics required in the CTE program and the difference the program has made to students. Steven Scott spoke to the relationship that CTE has with the business community. The Ashe Educational Partnership was developed to work with students and the business and educational systems in the county. Internships are also offered through the program. A lot of opportunities are offered to students through the program to help develop interests and get students on a pathway so that when they graduate they have an idea of what they want to do.

[PRES 19-51](#) Tax Administrator Chris Lambert-Monthly Tax Report for February 2019

Attachments: [03-18-19 Tax Report -February 2019](#)

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert presented the Tax Report for February 2019. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the report as presented. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.
Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

[PRES 19-52](#) County Librarian Suzanne Moore - Library Parking Lot Expansion Project

Attachments: [03-18-19 Library Parking Lot Expansion](#)
[03-18-19 Library Parking Lot Expansion-Additional Quotes](#)

County Librarian Suzanne Moore provided an update on upcoming programs at the Library. Next, Ms. Moore updated the Board on the progress made to gain support for the parking lot expansion. She provided the Board with copies of two additional quotes submitted for the project. The Town has committed \$20,000 towards the project and the Library will split the remaining cost with the County. They would like to have the project

completed by summer. Due to work done several years ago to repair a water leak, a small area of the existing parking lot had to be dug up and an estimate for that work has been submitted. The original cost estimate submitted by the Library last year was \$64,000 and with the lower estimates submitted for the retaining wall, the total cost still falls within the original estimate for the parking lot expansion, construction of the retaining wall, and repair to the driveway. Librarian Moore requested an estimate for repaving the entrance road which includes digging out the existing road and replacing it so that there will be a warranty on the work. Ms. Moore explained that the Town of West Jefferson would like to have a fence or rail installed at the top of the wall for safety. The request being made to the County is to fund the balance of the project and to manage the project. Commissioner Rhodes questioned the \$64,000 proposal and if the town's \$20,000 funding includes the cost for fencing. Ms. Moore answered that she is not sure if the fencing and the steps leading to the West Jefferson Park is included. Commissioner Dix questioned what it means for the County to manage the project. He still has questions that need to be answered and is reluctant to make a commitment when the final dollar amount is not known. Interim County Manager Adam Stumb explained management of the project to include contracts, invoices, and managing the construction by the County Maintenance Department. Commissioner Rhodes spoke to the funding split between the County and the Library for the total amount that the costs come to since one of the bids had a large difference in what it could cost. Chairman McNeill stated that he sees the fence as a discrepancy. Librarian Moore stated that a decision will need to be made on whether the road could be paved. Chairman McNeill explained paving of the road and Suzanne Moore added that paving will be to the top of the Library entrance road. She told the Board that the main concern is to have enough parking for patrons. Chairman McNeill questioned the warranty on paving the road and paving the parking lot. Commissioner Rhodes questioned how much the County owns past where employees currently park. He also asked if the County would be paving a street that the town owns. Chairman McNeill stated that the town would benefit from the added parking spaces. Commissioner Dix stated support for the Library but needs more time to research the information to have a better understanding and to have clarity before making a decision. He asked if this could be tabled until the next meeting. Chairman McNeill wants to see what the lowest bidder would quote for a fence. Commissioner Rhodes stated that West Jefferson Town Manager Brantley Price and Interim County Manager Adam Stumb need to determine what property belongs to the town and give the commissioners time to look at the additional bids that were just handed to them. He stated that the County will work with the town. He sees the need for parking but the two managers need to look at the details. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to table a decision on the Library parking lot expansion until the next meeting on April 1. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. Vice Chairman Sands stated concern for who owns the property where the additional parking will be located. Librarian Suzanne Moore stated that the slope of land belongs to the town and they gave the Library permission to expand the parking lot. With no further discussion, Chairman McNeill called for a vote to the motion on the floor. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

PRES 19-53 Chris Robinson, WCC Vice President - Ashe Campus Expansion Update

Wilkes Community College (WCC) Vice President Chris Robinson provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation on the expansion project and a timeline for completion of the school. He explained planned usage of the space on the first floor and the second floor. Mr. Robinson also provided information regarding a change to the plans presented in October 2018 on the front of the building which will allow for significant cost savings.

It was also cheaper to have a separate pre-engineered metal building built for the cosmetology and shop classes. Commissioner Rhodes questioned if there would be ample parking for the public that will come to the cosmetology building for services. Chris Robinson answered that space would be dedicated for the cosmetology patrons. Next, he reviewed the funding breakdown for the project and told the Board that the fundraising goal is \$1 million and thus far \$654,000 has been raised. The procurement stage will begin the first of May. The construction phase will hopefully begin the first of July. Fill dirt has been encountered on the site that will have to be removed and refilled to make the site buildable. Taking weather into consideration, construction will most likely stop at the end of October with startup in March 2021 and completion of the project approximately one year later. Commissioner Rhodes stated that the commissioners received from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners a list of the 2019/20 Legislative Goals. One of those is to seek additional revenue sources including a statewide bond and lottery proceeds to directly address statewide public school and community college capital challenges. Chris Robinson stated that Speaker Moore is the primary driver behind this. There is a huge shortfall in public schools capital funding. Wilkes Community College is in the process of submitting a list of priorities in case the bond would pass. Commissioner Dix stated concern for construction in a high traffic area and the safety of all the students. Chris Robinson stated that all contractors and their employees will be vetted due to their close proximity to the high school.

PRES 19-54 Interim County Manager Adam Stumb - ADAP Lease at Family Central

Attachments: [03-18-19 ADAP Lease at Family Central](#)

Interim County Manager Adam Stumb presented a proposed lease for ADAP at the Family Central facility. The lease would be for 1953 square feet to be leased at a rate of \$7.32 per square foot for a six-month period with the option to extend the lease for additional three-month periods. The lease would be for temporary space until ADAP can move into their new location. Michael Maybee with ADAP said they are looking at a number of locations since the space they were in sold quicker than they anticipated. A temporary location for ADAP to provide services is needed until a location is found to renovate or to build on. The request to the County is for a six-month lease with the option to renew at three month intervals. Mr. Maybee believes that Family Central would be a good centralized location to serve ADAP's clients. Chairman McNeill asked for a brief overview of ADAP responsibilities. Joy Graybeal answered that ADAP serves people with intellectual or developmental disabilities teaching them job skills. ADAP also assists their clients with goals and helps client families. Commissioner Dix asked how many people they serve and how many employees ADAP has. Ms. Graybeal answered that currently they serve 20 people with six employees. Commissioner Dix also questioned if the location at Family Central will provide enough space for their needs. Mr. Maybee answered that there would be enough space for a temporary location. Commissioner Rhodes explained that he had the opportunity to serve on the ADAP Board of Directors many years ago and stated appreciation for what ADAP does and for what a wonderful job they do. He also asked if there will be enough parking space at Family Central. With no further comments, Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to allow Interim County Manager Adam Stumb to negotiate the lease contract for ADAP. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

PRES 19-60 Sheriff Phil Howell - Renaming Job Titles at the Ashe County Sheriff's Office

Attachments: [03-18-19 Sheriff's Job Title Renaming](#)

Sheriff Phil Howell made a request to rename job titles at the Ashe County Sheriff's Office. By making this change, the positions will be more consistent across the Board. Staff at the Sheriff's Office are currently in the process of updating job descriptions for positions. The job descriptions were last updated in 1993 and the descriptions no longer reflect the job responsibilities. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to allow the Sheriff to rename job titles at the Sheriff's Office. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

PRES 19-61 Sheriff Phil Howell - Request for Maintenance Employee to be Assigned to the Sheriff's Office

Attachments: [03-18-19 Sheriff's Office Request for Maintenance Employee](#)

This item was deleted from the agenda.

PRES 19-62 Sheriff Phil Howell - Discussion Regarding Arming Certain Detention Officers to Complete Inmate Transports

Attachments: [03-18-19 Sheriff's Office Request to Arm Detention Officers](#)

Sheriff Phil Howell opened discussion regarding arming certain detention officers when they complete inmate transports. He explained that most of the larger offices across the State do this. It will take approximately six to eight months to complete the certification training. Chief Deputy Danny Houck told the Board that this will keep deputies in the County on patrol and responding to emergencies instead of spending time to transport inmates. Trips to transport inmates to Raleigh is at minimum a seven-hour trip. The Sheriff's Office would like to have two or three certified detention officers trained for transport duties with the ability to carry firearms only during transport. The firearms would stay locked up at the Sheriff's Office when not being used for transport. Commissioner Dix asked if the positions would be reclassified. It was answered that a detention officer would be trained for transport duties. Commissioner Dix questioned if the detention officer would receive additional compensation. Sheriff Howell answered that a determination has not been made yet. Chairman McNeill asked if a prisoner is transported across county lines if there is a requirement to have an armed guard. It was answered that policy does not require an armed person. Sheriff Howell cited a recent incident showing that a trained officer was needed to handle the situation in order to keep everyone safe. Commissioner Dix asked if there are drawbacks with this. Sheriff Howell answered that if this works out, the only cons would be additional training that is needed. He told the Board that he would like to spend two years doing this to see if it works. Vice Chairman Sands agrees with this and also sees the need. He would like to make sure that the County's insurance carrier is contacted regarding liability issues surrounding detention officers carrying fire arms. Sheriff Howell stated that this is in the scope of their duties and listed in the General Statutes. Commissioner Dix believes this is good for public safety. Chairman McNeill stated that this is also good for staff. Commissioner Rhodes asked if discussion has been held with current detention officers and if they are ok with this. Sheriff Howell answered yes, but process and policy needs to be solidified first. He stated that there is one employee that is very interested and would be a good candidate. Commissioner Rhodes stated that employees need to be comfortable with

what they do and not feel like they may lose their job.

GENERAL SESSION

Appointments

APP 19-10 Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) Board Member Appointment

Attachments: [03-18-19 JCPC Appointment](#)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to appoint Ashley Sheets as the Department of Social Services designee on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC). Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. Commissioner Dix made the comment that he knows Ashley Sheets and believes she will make a very good addition to the JCPC Board. With no further comments being made, the motion passed with unanimous approval.

Appointment(s) Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

APP 19-12 Airport Advisory Board Member Appointment

Attachments: [03-18-19 Airport Advisory Board Appointment](#)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to reappoint Ron Worley to the Airport Advisory Board. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Appointment(s) Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

APP 19-13 Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Board Member Appointment

Attachments: [03-18-19 LEPC Appointment](#)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to reappoint Anthony Farmer to the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) for a four-year term. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Appointment(s) Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

IX. Executive Session

ES 19-6 G.S.143-318.11 (a) (5) - Economic Development

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion for the Board to enter into Executive Session at 10:57 a.m. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Chairman McNeill declared the Board into Executive Session at 10:57 a.m. as provided for under G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5) to discuss economic development issues and out of Executive Session at 11:51 a.m. with no action taken.

Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:52 a.m. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Dix

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.

Todd McNeill, Chairman

Ann J. Clark, MMC, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board