

# **Ashe County**

*150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640*



## **Meeting Minutes - Draft**

**Monday, June 3, 2019**

**11:00 AM**

**Budget Work Session**

**Second Floor Conference Room**

### **County Commission**

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

**BUDGET WORK SESSION****I. 11:00 AM - Meeting Called to Order at the Ashe County Courthouse**

*Chairman McNeill called the Budget Work Session to order at 11:06 a.m. at the Ashe County Courthouse.*

**Present:** 5 - Commissioner Todd McNeill, Commissioner William Sands, Commissioner Larry Rhodes, Commissioner Paula Perry and Commissioner Larry Dix

**Governing Body**

*No changes were made.*

**Administration**

*No changes were made.*

*Interim County Manager Adam Stumb explained the overall increase (1.8%) in retirement expense for all departments due to the increased number of people retiring statewide and the return on investments not meeting goals set in the State Retirement System.*

*Finance Officer Sandra Long told the Board that a 2% COLA increase is included in the salaries for all employees.*

**Finance**

*Finance Officer Sandra Long was reclassified to Director of Fiscal Operations at Grade 78 Step 15.*

*Interim County Manager Adam Stumb told the Board that the cost for financial reviews of individual fire departments is included in the line item for Professional Services.*

**Tax Administration**

*No changes were made.*

**Legal**

*No changes were made.*

**Courts**

*No changes were made.*

**Elections**

*No changes were made.*

**Register of Deeds**

*No changes were made.*

## IT

*No changes were made.*

## Public Buildings

*No changes were made.*

*Interim County Manager Adam Stumb told the Board that DOT will help the County pay for costs associated with issues of debris washing into the highway in front of the Courthouse during heavy rains.*

## Emergency Management

*No changes were made.*

*The vehicle for the Emergency Management Department will be replaced at no cost to the County by utilizing FEMA Disaster Recovery grant funding.*

## Cooperative Extension

*Cooperative Extension Director Travis Birdsell spoke to the Board about the viability of the commercial kitchen. He explained that there is a strong push from the community to open the kitchen. Two essentials needed before opening the commercial kitchen include installation of a fire retardant system for two hoods and installation of double stacked convection ovens. The kitchen will be completed in two phases. The first phase is to target food services, which includes catering and food trucks, at an estimated cost of \$20,000. The second phase will entail value added services for farmers and small businesses to be able to rent the kitchen. A proposal is being made to split the time and cost of the proposed Local Food Program Assistant position with Alleghany County. Ashe County would be responsible to pay 1/3 of the salary, NC State would pay 1/3 of the salary, and Alleghany County would pay the remaining 1/3 salary expense. Cooperative Extension currently has \$30,000 budgeted for equipment expense and for the expense of 1/3 of the position. Mr. Birdsell spoke about the importance of marketing to the success of the program. A timeline for reassessment is needed so that if the program is not working, the kitchen will be closed down.*

*Extension Director Birdsell explained to the Board that the State has mandated an increase in salary to \$31,200 for the minimum wage paid to starting employees. One employee was affected by the mandate and the increase to the new minimum level brought that employee to the same wage as another employee that has worked at Cooperative Extension for eight years. The affected employee was increased to the appropriate grade/step level.*

## Fire

*No changes were made. Warrensville Fire Department representatives will make a presentation to the commissioners later during the budget work sessions.*

## Building Inspections

*No changes were made.*

## **Medical Examiner**

*No changes were made.*

## **Ambulance & Rescue**

*No changes were made.*

*Commissioner Dix told the Board that he has been approached about the need for an additional ambulance at Ashe Medics. Chairman McNeill stated that the cost would be approximately \$180,000 to add an ambulance. Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill provided statistics to the Board for calls and transports answered by all organizations in the County this year. Volunteer organizations answered 24 calls and there were a total of 3105 calls answered by Ashe Medics. In 2018, Ashe Medics responded to 3651 calls and 786 of those calls were no transport. Commissioner Rhodes opened discussion regarding the viability of a county-owned ambulance service. It was noted that studies have been done regarding this in the past and it was found that a county-owned ambulance provider would cost more than contracting the services. Both Commissioner Dix and Commissioner Rhodes would like to begin looking at this prior to the next ambulance contract renewal in 2024.*

## **Animal Control**

*Animal Control Director Joe Testerman will address the Board later in the budget work sessions.*

## **E911 Coordinator**

*No changes were made.*

## **Airport**

*No changes were made.*

## **Planning**

*No changes were made.*

## **Economic Development**

*The line item for Contracted Services was reduced to \$25,000.*

*Commissioner Dix left the meeting at approximately 3:30 p.m.*

## **II. Recess**

*The meeting was recessed at 3:40 p.m.*

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**Todd McNeill, Chairman**

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**Ann J. Clark, MMC, NCMCC**  
**Clerk to the Board**