

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, October 7, 2019

6:00 PM

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

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

BUSINESS SESSION**I. 6:00 PM - 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 6:00 p.m. on October 7, 2019 at the Ashe County Courthouse.

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer

Commissioner Dix led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Perry offered the opening prayer.

III. Approval of Minutes**MIN 19-50** September 16, 2019 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [10-07-19 September 16, 2019 Regular Session Minutes](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the September 16, 2019 Regular Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

MIN 19-51 September 16, 2019 Executive Session Minutes

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the September 16, 2019 Executive Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

MIN 19-52 September 17, 2019 Special Session Minutes

Attachments: [10-07-19 September 17, 2019 Special Session Minutes](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the September 17, 2019 Special Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Perry made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

V. Public Comment

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

VI. Presentations

PRES 19-171

6:05 PM - Public Hearing - Economic Development Proposal to Appropriate \$36,000 for Professional Engineering Services

Attachments: [10-07-19 Public Hearing-Economic Development](#)

Economic Development Director Cathy Barr provided a PowerPoint presentation to explain the request for an appropriation of \$36,000 to perform engineering services to determine if a tract of land is suitable for development as an industrial site. She explained the role that Ashe County Job Development (ACJD) plays in the project. Chairman McNeill read a statement from ACJD Chair Chris Robinson explaining the partnership between the County and ACJD on the project. Commissioner Dix made a motion to open the public hearing at 6:10 p.m. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. No public comment was offered and the public hearing was closed at 6:15 p.m. After comments from the commissioners, Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to appropriate \$36,600 from economic development funds to perform the initial engineering services on the property on Ray Taylor Road which is being considered for development of an industrial park. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with Commissioners McNeill, Sands, Perry and Dix voting in favor. Commissioner Rhodes abstained from voting resulting in a vote in the affirmative.

Approved

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

Abstain: 1 - Commissioner Rhodes

PRES 19-172

6:20 PM - Brian Shuping with VAYA Health - Resolution in Support of Funding for Mental Health Needs in Ashe County

Attachments: [10-07-19 VAYA Health Funding Resolution](#)

Brian Shuping, senior director of community relations with VAYA Health, presented a resolution opposing continued cuts to single stream funding of VAYA Health services provided. He explained that the General Assembly has proposed a \$9 million cut in state funding for individuals that do not have Medicaid. VAYA Health serves approximately 20,000 people without Medicaid. There are 498 people in Ashe County that will be affected. Mr. Shuping explained the steps they are taking to prepare for the anticipated funding cuts. He told the Board that Alleghany, Watauga, and Avery County commissioners have endorsed the resolution. Next, he answered questions from the Board regarding the resolution. Paige Stephens with DayMark Behavioral Healthcare thanked the Board for their commitment to working with Daymark to serve the needs in Ashe County. Daymark CEO Billy West spoke to the Board about behavioral healthcare challenges over the past few years and what to expect in the future. He also explained an increase in people needing their services. Paige Stephens spoke about the great

partnership between VAYA Health and Daymark. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the resolution in support of funding for VAYA Health as written. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.
Adopted

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

PRES
19-173

6:30 PM - Glenda Luther, Ashe Services for Aging - Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

Attachments: [10-07-19 SHIIP Update](#)

Glenda Luther, senior center director for Ashe Services for Aging, provided an update on the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP). She gave an overview of the program which provides information on Medicare program benefits. She also updated the Board on changes to the program for the upcoming year. Ms. Luther told the Board that SHIIP saved beneficiaries \$64 million across the state last year, and \$1 million for people in Ashe County.

PRES
19-174

6:40 PM Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Surplus Property Update

Attachments: [10-07-19 Surplus Property Update](#)

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert told the Board that the upset bid period for the TRI Properties surplus property has ended. The original offer on the property was \$10,000. After required advertising of the property, two additional bids were received. The final bid received was \$11,500.

PRES
19-175

6:50 PM - Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Monthly Tax Report

Attachments: [10-07-19 Monthly Tax Report](#)

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert presented the Monthly Tax Report for July 1, 2019. He told the Board that as of July 1, 2019, 70% of current year taxes have been collected, which is up 2% over last year's collections. Also, \$522,942 of delinquent taxes have been collected. With no further comments, Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to adopt the July 2019 Monthly Tax Report. Commissioner Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

PRES
19-176

6:55 PM - Lonnie Jones & Michael Herman - Request to Fund Roofing Repairs on the 1904 Courthouse

Attachments: [10-07-19 Request to Fund Roofing Repairs on the 1904 Courthouse](#)

Lonnie Jones with the 1904 Courthouse, along with Ramona Renfro and Mike Herman, told the Board that the copper roof on the 1904 Courthouse was installed in 1998. Major issues have developed with leaking on the back portion of the roof. A bid to repair the roof was received from Northwest Roofing to repair approximately 1360 feet of the roof on the back of the building for \$19,337. Wood that supports the roof will need to be

replaced and will require an additional \$11,000. The cost includes repairing another small leak on the dome of the roof. This brings the total request for funding to \$30,000 for the repairs. If the costs are less, any additional funding would be returned to the County. If the cost runs more, the 1904 Courthouse will use funding from their small building fund. Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to appropriate \$30,000 from the Contingency Fund for repairs to the 1904 Courthouse roof. Chairman McNeill seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-1, with Commissioner Rhodes voting in opposition.

Approved

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

Against: 1 - Commissioner Rhodes

PRES
19-177

7:05 PM - DSS Director Tracie Downer - Request to Change Program Manager Position to Deputy Director Position

Attachments: [10-07-19 DSS Position Title Change](#)

Department of Social Services (DSS) Director Tracie Downer presented a request to change the DSS program manager position to a deputy director position. The amount budgeted for the program manager position is \$67,653 at Grade 76, Step 4. The salary for the deputy director position would be Grade 77, Step 1, at \$65,649. Ms. Downer told the Board that she researched other counties and found that Ashe County needs a deputy director position. There are sufficient monies in the current budget to pay for the request. She also provided an explanation of the duties of this position. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the position change as requested. Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

PRES
19-178

7:15 pm - Interim County Manager Adam Stumb - Discussion Regarding New Middle School

Interim County Manager Adam Stumb opened discussion regarding the Ashe County Middle School construction project. He explained that it is important for the project to move forward as planned to allow for financing of this project and the Wilkes Community College expansion project. Manager Stumb then turned discussion over to members of the Board. Chairman McNeill explained that at a recent joint meeting held with the Board of Education, information and discussion was given regarding the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) delivery method and the traditional construction delivery method for capital construction projects. More and more school systems are using the CMAR delivery method for construction. One attractive point is that the method limits financial liability and the threat of the project going over budget. Commissioner Rhodes noted that in western North Carolina there are 18 public school systems being built using the CMAR delivery method. He was disappointed that the commissioners were not notified of changes in the school design. Ashe County was designated to receive \$15 million in lottery funds for the construction project. However, the County will still be required to appropriate \$5 million. The state will provide the \$10 million balance of the \$15 million for the school project. He spoke of neighboring counties using the CMAR method and the financial stability of using this type of program. Commissioner Dix stated that the CMAR method is very attractive with saving money and getting the project back on the original timeline. The program will control and manage costs of construction of the school. Vice

Chairman Sands stated that he was impressed with the CMAR method but believes this is a call that has to be made by the School Board.

GENERAL SESSION

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

IX. Executive Session

ES 19-21

G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5) - Acquisition of Property & G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) Legal Issues (Litigation Regarding Tax Office)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss the acquisition of property as provided for under G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5) and to discuss legal issues regarding the Tax Office as provided for under G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3).

Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Chairman McNeill declared the Board into Executive Session at 8:00 p.m. and out of Executive Session at 8:52 p.m. with no action taken.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:55 p.m. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry 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.