

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

10:30 AM

Work Session

Agricultural Services Building Conference Room

County Commission

*Chairperson Todd McNeill
Vice Chair William Sands
Commissioner Chuck Olive
Commissioner Jerry D. Powers
Commissioner Jonathan Jordan*

WORK SESSION

I. Meeting Called to Order at the Ashe County Agricultural Services Building Conference Room Immediately Following Regular Session Meeting

Chairman McNeill called the Work Session to order at 10:39 a.m. at the Ashe County Agricultural Services Building Conference Room.

Board Members present: Chairman Todd McNeill, Vice Chairman William Sands, Commissioner Jonathan Jordan, Commissioner Chuck Olive, and Commissioner Jerry D. Powers.

County staff present: County Manager Adam Stumb, Finance Officer Sandra Long, Chief Information Officer Todd Chapman, and Clerk to the Board Ashley Honeycutt.

Present: 5 - Commissioner Chuck Olive, Chairperson Todd McNeill, Vice Chairman William Sands, Commissioner Jerry D. Powers and Commissioner Jonathan Jordan

II. Purpose of Work Session

Chairman McNeill stated that the work session provided an effective time for the Board to discuss any topics and ask questions.

III. Desired Outcomes of Work Session

County Manager Adam Stumb noted that he hoped to outline the Board's goals for the coming year during the work session.

IV. Discussion - Tax Department

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert, Individual/Business Personal Property Supervisor Tyler Rash, and Real Property Appraisal Supervisor Mike Hobbs were in attendance for this discussion.

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert provided an overview of the department's organization as well as duties and responsibilities as defined by state law. He also described current and upcoming projects, including an addressing project, ongoing efforts to improve the Tax Department website, and a county-wide revaluation to be completed in house in 2023, among other projects.

V. Discussion - Department of Social Services

Department of Social Services Director Tracie Downer was in attendance for this discussion. DSS Adult Services Supervisor Jamie Shepherd, Children's Protective Services Supervisor Ashley Sheets, Family Support Services Supervisor Angie Ritter, Food and Nutrition Services Supervisor Nancy Jones, and Income Maintenance Administrator Jeana Arroyo attended and participated virtually via Zoom.

DSS Director Tracie Downer began the discussion by providing an overview of the department's mission to assist families and individuals by helping them maintain or improve their quality of life, while preventing abuse and collaborating with community partners. Director Downer noted that the federal and state tax money brought in by DSS goes directly to Ashe County individuals and families, and these monies totaled more than \$47.8 million in the fiscal year 2019-2020. She also expressed appreciation for the community agencies with which DSS works.

Each supervisor provided a brief overview of the work done by each section of the department and provided opportunities to answer questions. Income Maintenance Administrator Jeana Arroyo noted that there is a new category of Medicaid that pays for COVID-19 testing for any North Carolina residents who are US citizens without medical insurance.

VI. Discussion - Solid Waste

Department of Environmental Services Director Scott Hurley was in attendance for this discussion. He reported that the department plans to start construction on the new convenience center on Highway 163 in spring 2021 and that it could be completed in three to four months. He also noted that tonnage has increased over the last few years. Director Hurley mentioned for the Board's awareness that since last year, Ashe County has been receiving approximately 10% of its previous tire disposal fee funds from the state and noted that this could be an issue for future discussion.

VII. Discussion - Economic Development

Economic Development Director Cathy Barr was in attendance for this discussion. She provided an overview of the Ashe Industrial Park located on Ray Taylor Road adjacent to Generations Ashe. She shared details on grant applications in process, including funding available through Blue Ridge Energy and the Golden Leaf Foundation, and discussed plans for marketing the industrial sites after development.

VIII. Discussion - Agricultural Extension

Ashe County Cooperative Extension Director Travis Birdsell was in attendance for this discussion. He provided an overview of the department's work, which includes providing education and serving local residents in regards to agriculture, food and nutrition, and youth development. He discussed measures taken throughout 2020 to organize and coordinate food supply efforts and to meet needs for personal protective equipment. He also mentioned Cooperative Extension's acquisition of two pieces of shared use agricultural equipment to aid local farmers, and the Extension's management of the High Country Commercial Kitchen.

IX. Discussion - Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Director Kevin Anderson was in attendance for this discussion. He shared that the biggest project for Parks and Recreation in 2021 is the first update to its master plan since 2006. The master plan is intended to outline community and department goals for the next 10 years and will enable Ashe to qualify and apply for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grants. Director Anderson provided an overview of all the facilities and their current usages and safety protocols. He shared that he is cautiously optimistic about the possibility of resuming sports leagues and socially-distanced outdoor events in 2021.

X. Discussion - Rules of Procedure

Commissioner Powers requested that discussion on removing the requirement of a second from the Board's Rules of Procedure be put on the agenda for the February 1, 2021 Regular Session meeting.

XI. Discussion - Environmental Health

The Environmental Health staff from the Ashe County Health Department were unable to

attend the work session, so County Manager Adam Stumb offered to set up a future discussion with this department.

XII. Discussion - Airport

County Manager Adam Stumb mentioned that the Board typically has a meeting at the Ashe County airport, so he offered to schedule a time for the Commission to visit and meet with the Airport Advisory Board.

XIII. Conclusion/Next Steps

Chairman McNeill said that he would like to visit all County-owned buildings with County Manager Adam Stumb and Maintenance Supervisor Sammy Whicker before time to complete the next budget. Commissioner Jordan shared that he had been contacted about efforts to establish an in-patient hospice facility to serve Avery, Ashe, and Watauga Counties.

XIV. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:15 p.m. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner Olive, Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Sands, Commissioner Powers and Commissioner Jordan

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