

# **Ashe County**

*150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640*



## **Meeting Minutes - Draft**

**Wednesday, August 25, 2021**

**10:00 AM**

**Special Meeting**

**Agricultural Services Building Conference Room**

## **County Commission**

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

**BUSINESS SESSION****I. 10:00 AM - Meeting Called to Order at the Agricultural Services Building Conference Room**

*Chairman McNeill called the Special Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at the Ashe County Agricultural Services Building Conference Room. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss COVID-19 protocols.*

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

**II. Discussion**

*Chairman McNeill opened the floor for discussion regarding masking protocols for County buildings and properties. Commissioners Powers and Jordan expressed concerns that the Board had not yet had an opportunity to discuss mask protocols for the public, particularly because the Board would receive any complaints from citizens. Commissioner Powers raised a question regarding why the mid-August meeting was canceled, but Chairman McNeill explained that the cancellation was unrelated to COVID-19 or any COVID-19-related policies. Chairman McNeill also highlighted that any protocols discussed in the meeting would refer to County properties and buildings only, not the county as a whole.*

*AppHealthCare CEO and Health Director Jennifer Greene presented to the Board data on COVID-19 trends, expressing her concern for the recent steep rise in cases due to the Delta variant, which is more infectious than other strains of the virus. She shared that hospitalizations are increasing, which makes it difficult to transfer patients that need treatment for COVID-19 as well as common emergency situations including car accidents, heart issues, and strokes. Ms. Greene strongly encouraged the use of masks and vaccination and said that the vaccine is successful in preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19.*

*Commissioner Olive remarked that Ashe Memorial Hospital has had many patients very sick with COVID-19 recently and that patients needing specialized care elsewhere were having to wait days to be transferred due to the number of COVID patients in all hospitals at present. Ashe Medics Assistant Director Candace Barker also discussed the high numbers of local COVID patients and resultant transport challenges. Ms. Barker said that due to at-home test kits being available at CVS and Walmart, she is concerned that the situation is worse than the public health numbers show.*

*After some discussion, the Board was in favor of requesting but not requiring that the public wear masks in County buildings, and the Board upheld the requirement for County employees to wear masks in shared spaces. Department of Social Services (DSS) Director Tracie Downer noted that while DSS is requiring clients to wear a mask when entering DSS office spaces, all services are also available remotely. Parks & Recreation Director Kevin Anderson added that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board had unanimously recommended that for indoor fall sports leagues, masks be required for all present except the players on the court. Cooperative Extension Director Travis Birdsell shared that due to a federal government mask requirement and numerous spaces in the Agricultural Services Building being leased to federal organizations, masks are required in the Agricultural Services Building.*

**III. Adjournment**

*Commissioner Powers made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:04 a.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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