

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

9:00 AM

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

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

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

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer

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

III. Approval of Minutes**[MIN 21-30](#) August 2, 2021 Regular Session Minutes**

Attachments: [9-7-21 August 2, 2021 Regular Session Minutes.pdf](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the August 2, 2021 Regular Session Minutes as written. 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

[MIN 21-31](#) August 3, 2021 Work Session Minutes

Attachments: [9-7-21 August 3, 2021 Work Session Minutes.pdf](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the August 3, 2021 Work Session Minutes as written. 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

[MIN 21-32](#) August 3, 2021 Executive Session Minutes

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the August 3, 2021 Executive Session Minutes as written. 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

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Olive 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 Olive, Chairperson McNeill, Vice Chairman Sands, Commissioner Powers and Commissioner Jordan

V. Public Comment

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

VI. Presentations

[PRES
21-118](#)

9:05 AM - Sheriff Phil Howell - Thank You and Budget Amendment

Attachments: [9-7-21 ACSO Budget Amendment.pdf](#)

Sheriff Phil Howell presented the following budget amendment for the Board's approval. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the amendment as requested. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

BUDGET AMENDMENT September 7, 2021

To increase the appropriation for the department of Law Enforcement from \$3,329,141 to \$3,344,025; this increased appropriation to be made by appropriating \$14,884 from unappropriated Insurance Proceeds revenues in the General Fund.

Sheriff Howell also provided the Board with an update on recent operations, including the grant-facilitated purchase of body cameras for all detention and law enforcement officers, a Back the Blue cookout held this summer, and the Back to School Blast/Deputy for a Day event which benefited approximately 1,500 kids. Sheriff Howell also noted that the new detention van should be ready for pick up this week and that the jail received its first zero deficiency inspection in June. Lastly, Sheriff Howell expressed his and his staff's gratitude for the support of the Board. He displayed a protective shield and helmet purchased through a special appropriation of occupancy tax by the Board and shared how meaningful the purchase of this equipment was to the Sheriff's Office.

Approved

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

[PRES
21-119](#)

9:15 AM - Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill - Ambulance Service Contract Discussion

Attachments: [9-7-21 Ambulance Service Contract Discussion.pdf](#)

Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill shared with the Board that the County's current EMS contract will expire on June 30, 2024, and that she will need the Board's direction in the next few months to allow for adequate time to proceed. The options are to negotiate with the current provider, issue a Request for Proposals from other entities, or operate a County EMS service, which Ms. Gambill said was not currently feasible. Ms. Gambill made the recommendation to pursue one of the first two options. She also requested that if the Board prefers to renegotiate the current contract, she would like to add an additional unit designated to stay within the county at all times, due

to increased call volumes. Ashe Medics Director Craig Sullivan also shared his concerns over call volume with the Board, noting that he does not think the County can wait until the end of the current contract to add a fourth unit. Commissioner Powers asked when another truck could feasibly be added, and Mr. Sullivan responded that they could be ready by January 1, 2022. Ms. Gambill requested a formal decision for how to proceed with the next contract by April 2022.

[PRES](#)
[21-120](#)

9:25 AM - Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Monthly Tax Report and EagleView Demonstration

Attachments: [9-7-21 Monthly Tax Report.pdf](#)

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert presented the monthly tax report for July 2021. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the report as presented. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Mr. Lambert also provided a demonstration of the department's EagleView software. He noted that the photographs were taken aerially from 7,500 feet from January to April 2021. He shared that this software would allow the tax office to complete the next revaluation in house and be more cost effective.

Approved

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

[PRES](#)
[21-121](#)

9:40 AM - Economic Development Director Cathy Barr - Ashe Industrial Park Update

Attachments: [9-7-21 Industrial Park Update.pdf](#)

Economic Development Director Cathy Barr provided the Board with an update on the Ashe County Industrial Park. She shared that the County has received a number of grants totaling \$1.38 million, in addition to a Rural Economic Development Loan Grant (REDLG) loan in the amount of \$1.36 million, if needed. She noted that the last cost estimate for the development of the park is almost two years old, so an updated cost estimate will be used to determine the need for use of the REDLG funds. She also shared the covenants that outline the rules governing the park.

[PRES](#)
[21-122](#)

9:50 AM - Keep Ashe Beautiful President Bill Apple - Keep Ashe Beautiful Funding Request

Attachments: [9-7-21 Keep Ashe Beautiful.pdf](#)

Keep Ashe Beautiful representative John Pence shared with the Board an overview of the organization and its operations. Keep Ashe Beautiful (KAB) is an all volunteer non-profit started in 2012 which conducts beautification projects, student education, community awareness, and numerous litter sweeps each year. He noted that the number of volunteers for litter sweeps has grown significantly, which also increases the expense of holding sweeps. He shared data from Keep America Beautiful that the cost of their activities, if contracted by the County, would be over \$42,000. Mr. Pence requested monetary support from the Board to further KAB's operations, and Chairman McNeill suggested that the group coordinate with the County Manager to determine the best plan.

[PRES](#)
[21-123](#)

10:05 AM - County Manager Adam Stumb and Environmental Services Director Scott Hurley - Landfill Airspace Analysis Discussion

Attachments: [9-7-21 Landfill Airspace Analysis.pdf](#)

County Manager Adam Stumb and Environmental Services Director Scott Hurley discussed with the Board a recent analysis of the remaining airspace in the landfill. According to the analysis, completed in June 2021, an estimated 8.5 years of usage remain for the current cell. Mr. Hurley discussed the potential for using the Phase 3 cell in the future but noted that a risk-based assessment would have to be completed to determine whether the cell can be used. County Manager Stumb pointed out that the assessment is a multi-step process and suggested that the County pursue the first two steps then return to the Board.

PRES
21-124

10:20 AM - County Manager Adam Stumb - CDBG-CV Program Service Adjustment Request

Attachments: [9-7-21 CDBG-CV Program Service Adjustment.pdf](#)

Department of Social Services Director Tracie Downer shared with the Board that the County has sought to amend its program for a Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) grant to assist more citizens in need. She added that many people who had fallen behind on utility payments during the early days of the pandemic had found other resources, so the County is hoping to expand funding opportunities to provide assistance for internet service, rent payments, food pantries, and more.

PRES
21-126

10:25 AM - County Manager Adam Stumb - American Rescue Plan (ARP) Updates and Future ARP Budget Meeting Scheduling

County Manager Adam Stumb shared with the Board an update on the County's American Rescue Plan funds. He explained that the County has received the first half of its almost \$5.3 million but has not spent any funds to date. The County has until December 31, 2024, to appropriate the monies, and until December 31, 2026, for the funds to be spent. County Manager Stumb added that the County is still awaiting final guidance from the U.S. Treasury and is making initial plans based on the Interim Final Rule. The Board made plans to hold a special meeting after the regular session meeting on September 20, 2021, to discuss budget ideas for the funds.

GENERAL SESSION

Appointments

APP 21-6

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) Appointments

Attachments: [9-7-21 JCPC Appointments.pdf](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to reappoint Jennifer DeSpain, Scott Perry, Paige Stephens, Pam Barlow, and Doug Goss to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) for a two-year term. Commissioner Jordan seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Commissioner Olive made a motion to appoint Jimmy Poplin to replace Zack Shepherd as a representative for Mental Health to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) for a two-year term. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Appointment(s) Approved

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

Proclamations

PRO 21-1 Proclamation Honoring the 20th Anniversary of 9/11

Attachments: [9-7-21 9-11 20th Anniversary Proclamation.pdf](#)

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to adopt the Proclamation Honoring the 20th Anniversary of 9/11. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

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

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

IX. Executive Session

ES 21-5 G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5) Acquisition of Property & G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) - Legal Issues (Opioid Litigation)

Vice Chairman Sands 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 legal issues regarding the national opioid litigation as provided for under G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3). Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Chairman McNeill declared the Board in Executive Session at 11:21 a.m. and out of Executive Session at 12:19 p.m. with no action being taken.

Approved

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

X. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:19 p.m. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

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.