

# **Ashe County**

*150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640*



## **Meeting Minutes - Draft**

**Monday, September 20, 2021**

**1:00 PM**

**ARP Budget Work Session**

**The Venue at the Ashe County Chamber of Commerce**

## **County Commission**

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

**BUSINESS SESSION****I. 1:00 PM - Meeting Called to Order at The Venue at the Ashe County Chamber of Commerce**

*Chairman McNeill called the ARP Budget Work Session to order at 1:07 p.m. at The Venue at the Ashe County Chamber of Commerce.*

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

**II. Discussion**

*County Manager Adam Stumb shared with the Board a spreadsheet detailing requests received for American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funds, as well as recommendations for allocations and justifications for how potential uses of funds could meet the ARP Interim Final Rule requirements. He also noted that numerous units across the country have submitted questions to the US Treasury regarding the timeline for the Final Rule, and the Treasury responded that week with instructions to rely on the Interim Final Rule (IFR) in the meantime.*

*Beginning with Ashe Memorial Hospital, County Manager Stumb shared that CEO Brian Yates said that the hospital is having a difficult time maintaining staff at all levels and in all departments, so Mr. Yates hoped to provide retention bonuses to existing staff. The Board expressed concern for the hospital, and Commissioner Powers recommended that registered nursing staff, CNAs, laboratory staff, and the Community Paramedic program receive bonuses as requested.*

*Next, the Board discussed the rescue squad and volunteer fire departments. County Manager Stumb noted that while all units responded to the COVID-19 health crisis, a limited amount of their expenses or ARP fund requests were attributable to COVID-19 mitigation as allowed under the IFR. In regards to Ashe County Schools, County Manager Stumb reported that Maintenance Director Jerry Baker was supposed to get an accurate cost for water/sewer projects for the new middle school but it was unclear whether the HVAC would be eligible.*

*County Manager Stumb explained that the Ashe Food Pantry highlighted a freezer and refrigerated box truck as two most pressing needs out of a list of several desired improvements. Department of Social Services (DSS) Director Tracie Downer added context, noting that the truck would allow Ashe Food Pantry to pick up more food from regional food banks that may be decreasing deliveries, so the investment would result in more food being dispersed throughout Ashe County. In regards to AppHealthCare, County Manager Stumb and the Board discussed making infrastructure improvements to the County-owned health department building.*

*County Manager Stumb requested that the Board provide guidance as to how they would like to allocate funds for County use. The Board discussed options for providing essential worker bonuses, expressing preference for a flat rate based on full- or part-time status. County Manager Stumb offered to meet with Finance Officer Sandra Long and Human Resources Director Angie Eggers to discuss what other counties are doing and the best way to calculate these bonuses.*

*DSS Director Tracie Downer made two requests for funds. The first was to provide seed money for a non-profit to plan and build modest homes for low-income or first-time home buyers. Ms. Downer's other request was for funds to form a homeless shelter or warming*

*station to be managed by another entity. She offered to work with County Manager Stumb to provide more specific budget information.*

*Judy Bare also shared with the Board a request to aid the agriculture sector in Ashe County. She noted the importance of agriculture to the local economy and explained that costs were up significantly for all farmers due to COVID-19.*

*After further discussion with the Board, County Manager Stumb offered to refine the budget and bring the Board an updated version based on their discussions and recommendations.*

### **III. Adjournment**

*Commissioner Jordan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:29 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

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