

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, January 17, 2023

9:00 AM

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

Chairperson Todd McNeill

Vice Chair Chuck Olive

Commissioner William Sands

Commissioner Jerry D. Powers

Commissioner Mike Eldreth

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

Chairman McNeill called the January 17th, 2023 Regular Session Meeting to order at 9:00AM at the Ashe County Courthouse in the small courtroom on the 3rd floor.

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer

Commissioner Eldreth led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Sands offered the opening prayer.

III. Approval of Minutes

Vice Chairman Olive made the motion to approve the December 19th, 2022 Regular Session Minutes. Commissioner Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

[MIN 22-45](#) December 19th, 2022 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [1-17-23 December 19th, 2022 Regular Session Minutes](#)

IV. Adoption of Agenda

County Manager Adam Stumb had one addition he wished to add to today's agenda, that addition being an update on the recent water damage at the Health Department due to burst pipes in the ceiling. Also Commissioner Mike Eldreth wished to be added to today's agenda to discuss severe road hazards on the Northwest School Road to the Middle School.

Commissioner Powers made the motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

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

V. Public Comment

Chairman McNeill opened the floor for Public Comment at. At this time Cindy Thompson, Newly appointed Field Representative for Congresswoman Virginia Foxx took the podium and introduced herself. She spoke on her newly created position within Congresswoman Foxx's Office as a "Field Representative" and that her role will be to visit each community to see what the needs might be in each. She also spoke on Congresswoman Foxx's appointment as the Chair to the Education & Workforce Committee. With no questions or concerns Chairman McNeill thanked her for being here and she returned to her seat.

Vickie S. Young – Commercial/Ag Loan Officer with Carolina Farm Credit then took the

podium and stated that each year, Carolina Farm Credit supports non-profit organizations with grants of up to \$5,000 to help in their endeavors and to further the future of agriculture in our region of North Carolina. The Fund's mission is to build strong partnerships and alliances, leveraging the resources within the fund to preserve and promote the farmer, the family, and our rural communities. The fund has two main objectives: to invest in the future of agriculture and to enhance and impact the quality of life in rural North Carolina. She then announced that Carolina Farm Credit was awarding Ashe County \$5000 to go towards the Agricultural Center. The Board thanked her & Carolina Farm Credit for the generous gift and at that time Vickie Young returned to her seat. With no other movement from the public Chairman McNeill closed the floor for public comment.

VI. Presentations

[PRES](#)
[22-239](#)

9:03 AM - Kevin Anderson, Director Ashe County Parks and Recreation - Transfer of Donated Funds to Operating Budget for Purchase of New Scoreboard for Family Central

Attachments: [1-17-23 Scoreboard, Quote, copy of donated check from Skyline](#)

Kevin Anderson, Director Ashe County Parks and Recreation presented to the Board a request for donated funds from Skyline National Bank to be transferred to Parks & Recreation operating budget for the purchase of a new scoreboard for Family Central soccer/football field. In appreciation, the 10'X5' scoreboard will have a 10'X2' bottom panel with Skyline National Bank's name and emblem. The donation covers the cost of the new scoreboard which totals \$6442. Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to approve for the donated funds from Skyline National Bank to be transferred to Parks & Recreation operating budget for the purchase. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

[PRES](#)
[22-242](#)

9:05 AM - Tracie McMillan, Director, Ashe County Department of Social Services - Monthly Statistics Report for December 2022

Attachments: [1-17-23 DSS Monthly Statistics Report December 2022](#)

Tracie McMillan, Director, Ashe County Department of Social Services presented to the Board the DSS Monthly Statistics Report for December 2022. She spoke on the report as well as adoption processes in the county. She also spoke on heat assistance for the county and the different resources available for those in need. Commissioner Eldreth asked about assistance for the homeless in the county and Tracie explained all the different resources available for them and how DSS reaches out to them. No action needed.

No Action Taken

[PRES 23-2](#)

9:10 am - Tracie McMillan Director, Ashe County Department of Social Services - CDBG Covid Grant Extension Request

Attachments: [1-17-23 Ashe County CDBG – CV 20 – V – 3509](#)

Tracie McMillan Director, Ashe County Department of Social Services presented to the board a CDBG Covid Grant Extension Request. Tracie respectfully requests an extension

for the CDBG – CV grant. The county would like to move the final date of obligation from March 17, 2023, to March 15, 2024. In addition, the County requests that the last day to spend funds be moved from June 17, 2023 to June 17, 2024. Finally, the county would like to extend the time for the submission of the closeout paperwork to Commerce be extended from September 17, 2023 to September 17, 2024. If these dates do not work with your requirements, please give us as much time as you possibly can so that we can help as many people as we can with these funds. Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to approve the extension. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

[PRES 23-1](#) 9:15 AM - Chris Lambert Tax Administrator - Monthly Tax Report for December 2022

Attachments: [1-17-23 December 2022 Monthly Tax Report](#)

Chris Lambert Tax Administrator presented to the Board the Monthly Tax Report for December 2022. A small discussion was held on collections monthly total & delinquent taxes. Commissioner Powers made the motion approving the December 2022 Monthly Tax Report. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

[PRES 22-240](#) 9:20 AM - Lonnie Jones, Cemetery Committee - Update

Attachments: [1-17-23 Cemetery Committee Written Update & Photos](#)

Lonnie Jones, Cemetery Committee presented to the Board an Update on what was currently underway with the Cemetery Committee. He spoke on the insurmountable issues surrounding the counties more than 900 known cemeteries. Desecrated graves is a major issue. Land being purchased and new owners dozing over graves and piling grave markers to the side of the property. The task of cleaning up unkempt cemeteries, little known civil war & pre-civil war cemeteries. Brush clearing & removal to clean up the many cemeteries is expensive, volunteers, equipment & donations will be necessary. It's a responsibility that we share that cannot be ignored. He said the need for assistance was great. The need for legal assistance to stop the desecration in particular by new land owners. He stated there needed to be a public information effort to inform people of cemetery laws & regulations. Historical status for appropriate cemeteries is important. He hopes to organize volunteers to add to the "FIND-A-GRAVE" website information on additional burials and maybe even a local website. Other things the committee hopes to accomplish is GPS coordinates of cemeteries added to deeds, have funeral homes provide a listing of new burials and locations. Follow other counties in passing an ordinance protecting cemeteries. He showed many photographs of county cemeteries proving the removal & discarding of markers by property owners. Mr. Jones stated that the committee was better organizing to try to come up with ways to right these wrongs. Mr. Jones also asked for the approval for the appointment of two new members to the Cemetery Committee. Jennifer Thompson Dollar & Dr. Bob White have applied to be members. Commissioner Powers made the motion to approve the two new members.

Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

[PRES
22-241](#)

9:25 AM - Pana Columbus Director of Community Relations/Programs at High Country Caregivers - Update on High Country Caregivers (Video Presentation)

Attachments: [1-17-23 Email Request from Pana Columbus](#)

Pana Columbus Director of Community Relations/Programs at High Country Caregivers presented to the Board an informational update on High Country Caregivers and presented Video Presentation. She stated that she works with High Country Caregivers, a nonprofit that serves families in which grandparents are raising grandchildren, largely because of the local opioid epidemic. She wanted the opportunity to let the commissioners know what services are available for our families in Ashe County.

No Action Taken

[PRES 23-3](#)

9:30 Am - Twila Miller, Owner of Journey 2 Fitness - Request to hold a 5K Race Fundraiser.

Attachments: [1-17-23 5K Run For Warmth](#)
[5K Run For Warmth DOT Letter](#)

Twila Miller, Owner of Journey 2 Fitness presented to the Board a Request to hold a 5K Race Fundraiser. She stated that she was a personal trainer and owner of Journey 2 Fitness. She stated that she is directing a 5K race fundraiser on February 25th, 2023 from 2pm- 4pm. The fund raiser will be for fuel assistance and will be given to Generations fuel assistance fund and Ashe Really Cares fuel assistance fund. She said she has already met with the town board and received their support and permission and now needs DOT approval for use of the roads which requires written permission and acknowledgement from all local governments in the jurisdiction of the race. She provided the each commissioner with additional information including a map of the location. She stated that she would be happy to speak with anyone necessary or answer any questions. After a brief discussion Commissioner Eldreth made the motion to approve. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

[PRES 23-4](#)

9:35 AM - Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager - AEV Lease Amendment

Attachments: [1-17-23 Lease with AEV - Revised-](#)

Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager presented to the Board an AEV Lease Amendment. Adam stated that AEV has requested to add an additional 50 vehicles to their lease. If the Board is in agreement Adam asked to make that 100 additional vehicles to avoid another return visit to the Board. Commissioner Powers made the motion to approve the lease amendment for AEV as presented. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

PRES 23-5 9:40 AM - Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager - Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE) Memorandum of Understanding

Attachments: [1-17-23 County of Ashe CORE MOU Resolution](#)

23-5 Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager presented to the Board the Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE) Memorandum of Understanding for the Boards approval. Adam stated that this program, facilitated by NC Commerce will assist with strategic planning around outdoor recreation and will include, asset mapping, planning, and business recruitment around recreation. Vice Chairman Olive made the motion to approve the (CORE) Memorandum of Understanding. Commissioner Powers seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

PRES 23-6 9:45 AM - Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager - Parks and Recreation Use Agreement

Attachments: [1-17-23 Parks & Rec Agreement](#)

Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager presented to the Board the Parks and Recreation Use Agreement along with Kevin Anderson Director of Ashe County Parks & Recreation. This is an update to the agreement we have with the school system. Kevin Anderson and Jerry Baker have made some revisions and have requested approval. Vice Chairman made the motion to approve the Board the Parks and Recreation Use Agreement. Commissioner Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

PRES 23-7 9:50 AM - Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager - Golden Leaf Grant Acceptance

Attachments: [1-17-23 2022-147 Ashe County Ag Ctr Grantee Acknowledgment and Agreement](#)

Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager presented to the Board the Golden Leaf Grant for a formal acceptance. Adam stated we need formal acceptance of the Golden Leaf Grant that the County received for the Ag Center (\$500,000). Vice Chairman Olive made the motion to formally accept the Golden Leaf Grant. Commissioner Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

[PRES 23-8](#) 9:55 AM - Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager - Landfill Timber Discussion

Adam Stumb Ashe County-County Manager discussed with the Board issues surrounding the Landfill Timber. Adam stated that the timber had been about cut at the landfill. Once completed this area will be used for a borrow area for dirt to cover the landfill. Stating that no garbage will be placed in this area. He also stated that there have been complaints from three adjoining property owners, about how visible the landfill is now with the trees cut. Adam stated that he & Director of Environmental Services Scott Hurley need some direction on how to proceed. One proposed solution in looking to correct the visibility of the landfill is to look at maybe planting a row of fast growing trees. To be discussed at a later date. No action needed today.

No Action Taken

[PRES 23-9](#) 10:00 AM - County Manager Adam Stumb - Update on Water Damage at the Health Department

County Manager Adam Stumb discussed with the Board the Water Damage at the Health Department. Adam stated that they are still working through the damage to the Health Department. Insurance has provided us with an estimate on damages but we have run into some other issues which will delay the reopening. Because of the age of the building (1950s), there were concerns about some of the flooring that was damaged and the possibility of asbestos in those materials. Unfortunately, after testing, ceiling & floor tiles in a large portion of the building was found to contain asbestos. This will require remediation before we can even begin to make repairs to the building stated Adam. Plans were already in the works to update & make repairs on the building. He also said that due to the discovery of asbestos, the Health Department is looking for temporary options to reopen. Options are limited because there are not many vacant buildings that would work for them. All options are on the table and welcome any ideas. No action needs to be taken today. We will be working and updating as things progress.

No Action Taken

[PRES 23-10](#) 10:05 AM - Commissioner Mike Eldreth - Road Hazards on the Northwest School Road to the Middle School

Commissioner Mike Eldreth wanted to discuss some concerning road hazards on the Northwest School Road to the Middle School. He provided photographs and showed where springs have come up under the road in the last two years causing water to continually run across the road. The biggest most dangerous hazard is when temperatures go below freezing creating a 40 foot sheet of ice across the road. Commissioner Eldreth also stated that approximately 70 feet past this water issue is a very large sink hole that is continuously growing in size. He said he had contacted DOT in the past and that they came and put rocks in the sink hole stating "that should take care of the issue". It did not take care of the issue, the rocks sank and the hole is continuously getting larger. Commissioner Eldreth stated something needed to be done before people are hurt. Chairman McNeil stated that the county had a new Roadside Engineer that was doing an outstanding job and that they would contact him today.

No Action Taken

GENERAL SESSION

[MISC 23-1](#) BROC - Ashe - Community Care Block Grant 2023-2024 for approval.
(separate packet brought in by Stacy Howell, Community Services Block

Grant Program Director)

Attachments: [1-17-23 BROC Letter](#)

In a separate packet sent in by Stacy Howell, Community Services Block Grant Program Director the Board was given the BROC - Ashe - Community Care Block Grant 2023-2024 for their review & approval. Commissioner Powers made the motion to approve the BROC - Ashe - Community Care Block Grant 2023-2024. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

Adam Stumb, Ashe County-County Manager announced the date and time for the Board of Commissioners Work Session on January 30th, 2023 in the 2nd floor conference room at the Ashe County Courthouse. It is open to the public if the anyone wishes to attend. Below are the list of topics planned for the agenda:

- *Tax Department: Reevaluation*
- *Landfill Expansion*
- *Parks and Rec: Family Central/Park/Warrenville Middle School*
- *Middle School Update*
- *Ag Center*

Right now we have the meeting scheduled to start at 8:30 am that morning.

IX. Executive Session

Commissioner Powers made the motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss Economic Development as provided for under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5). Commissioner Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Chairman McNeill declared the Board in Executive Session at 11:24 am. and out of session at 11:55 am. No Action Taken.

[ES 23-1](#)

G.S. 143-318.11(4). Economic Development

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Powers made the motion to adjourn the January 17th, 2023 Regular Session Meeting at 11:56 am. Vice Chairman Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

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.

Todd McNeill, Chairman

Missy Seivers
Clerk to the Board