

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, April 1, 2019

9:00 AM

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

Chairperson Todd McNeill

Vice Chair William Sands

Commissioner Larry Rhodes

Commissioner Paula Perry

Commissioner Larry Dix

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

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

Present: 5 - Commissioner Todd McNeill, Commissioner William Sands, Commissioner Larry Rhodes, Commissioner Paula Perry and Commissioner Larry Dix

II. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer

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

III. Approval of Minutes

[MIN 19-17](#) March 18, 2019 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [04-01-19 March 18, 2019 Regular Session Minutes](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the March 18, 2019 Regular Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Rhodes seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

[MIN 19-18](#) March 18, 2019 Executive Session Minutes

Action regarding the March 18, 2019 Executive Session Minutes was tabled until the April 15, 2019 meeting of the Board.

Tabled

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

V. Public Comment

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

VI. Presentations

[PRES 19-63](#) 9:05 AM - David Blackburn - Ashe County Middle School-Based Health Center, Top Dog Clinic Report

Attachments: [04-01-19 Top Dog Clinic Annual Report](#)

David Blackburn, board chair of the Ashe County Middle School-based Health Center, opened the presentation of the Top Dog Clinic Annual Report. The clinic offers free medical services for middle school students serving 85% of the student population. Both physical and mental illnesses are treated. The clinic was established in 1999 and continues to be the lead agency for school-based health centers across the state.

Kelly Walsh, director of services at AppHealthCare, offered information through a PowerPoint presentation on the purpose of AppHealthCare listing credentials and personnel employed at the Top Dog Clinic.

Lead Nurse Emily Mosely provided information on services offered at the Top Dog Clinic and information on enrollment. She told the Board that over 1000 visits were made to the Top Dog Clinic last year. One quarter of those visits were to address mental health needs.

Sierra Summerville explained mental health services offered at the Top Dog Clinic.

Jennifer Greene informed the Board about benefits of the Top Dog Clinic, FY2019/20 funding sources, and the partnership that exists with Ashe County Schools and AppHealthCare.

Dustin Farmer, principal at Ashe County Middle School and a representative of the advisory board, explained the makeup of the advisory board and opportunities that exist for planning and growth.

Commissioner Dix asked how referrals to the clinic are made. AppHealthCare Director Jennifer Greene answered that there are self referrals but normally a referral is made by the school counselor. Chairman McNeill asked if the costs would be similar if a clinic was started at the high school. Ms. Greene answered that there are opportunities with tele-health that would work very well for this purpose.

PRES 19-64 9:15 AM - Kelly Walsh with AppHealthCare - Child Fatality Prevention Team Annual Report

Attachments: [04-01-19 Child Fatality Team Annual Report](#)

Kelly Walsh with AppHealthCare presented the Child Fatality Prevention Team Annual Report including information regarding work of the team for the past two years. The Child Fatality Prevention Team reviews details of child deaths with a report that summarizes the causes of death.

PRES 19-65 9:25 AM - Grier Hurley, Attorney for Ashe DSS - Community Child Protection Team Annual Report

Attachments: [04-01-19 Community Child Protection Team Annual Report](#)

Grier Hurley, attorney for the Ashe Department of Social Services, presented the Community Child Protection Team Annual Report. Both the Community Child Protection Team and the Child Fatality Prevention Team meet jointly on a bi-monthly basis. The Community Child Protection Team looks at the gaps in services provided and the needs of children. She stated that a representative of the NEST Alliance would be a good addition to the Child Protection Team and asked the Board to add the position on the team for a NEST Alliance member and also to recognize the need for services and

workers. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to add a NEST Alliance member to the Community Child Protection Team. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Commissioner Rhodes asked for an explanation of the need for a local attorney in a school setting. Ms. Hurley answered that in situations where a child has issues with substance abuse, there is no alternative school setting. Commissioner Rhodes asked if the NEST Alliance has been approached about a member serving on the Community Child Protection Team. Ms. Hurley answered that they have been. Commissioner Rhodes then made a motion to add a position representing the NEST Alliance on the Child Protection Team. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. Commissioner Dix stated that his wife is a board member of the NEST Alliance and would like for representatives of the NEST Alliance to make a presentation to the Board in the near future. With no further comments, Chairman McNeill called for a vote to the motion on the floor. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

PRES 19-66 9:30 AM - DSS Director Tracie Downer - Monthly Departmental Report

Attachments: [04-01-19 DSS Monthly Departmental Report](#)

Department of Social Services Director Tracie Downer presented the Board with handouts of an updated staff listing and reporting to the Board that DSS is now fully staffed. Next, she reviewed the monthly departmental report with the Board. Ms. Downer updated the Board on the modified Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been sent to the State including performance measures in the MOU. The NC Fast Program was scheduled to go live in March but the State is now allowing counties to opt out of going live because the system is not operating 24/7/365 as it needs to be. Ashe County decided to opt out until necessary fixes are completed.

Kim Miles, program manager, updated the Board on the NCFast Program. In 2018 her department began partnering with ASU on an internship program and two interns are now working in child welfare. She also provided an update on upcoming events.

Ashley Sheets, Investment, Assessment & Treatment Supervisor, spoke about working in conjunction with the Guardian Ad Litem program to host a march on April 17 regarding child abuse.

Ed Hurst, Foster Care Supervisor, told the Board that the targeted audience for the march are families who are experiencing factors that could lead to child abuse.

Alyssa Johnson, foster care worker, provided information on the Links Program which assists children ages 13 - 21 that are in foster care. Currently there are 14 children in custody and 2 children out of custody that are being served through the program. There are also two individuals enrolled in the 18 - 21 program. In answer to a question from Commissioner Dix, DSS Director Tracie Downer explained funding sources for the federally funded program.

PRES 19-67 9:40 AM - Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill - Designation of Applicant's Agent for Hazard Mitigation Grant Projects

Attachments: [04-01-19 Designation of Applicant's Agent](#)

Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill presented a resolution designating the Applicant's Agent for Hazard Mitigation Grant projects. She explained that the County has the opportunity to apply for a wildfire hazard mitigation grant. Funding is provided through 25% from FEMA and 75% from the State of North Carolina. The County would not be required to contribute funding for the project. By approving the resolution, the County could apply for and administer the grant. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the resolution as presented. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

PRES 19-68 9:45 AM - Airport Manager Eric Payne - Project Change Switching Funding from the Parallel Taxiway & Apron Project to the Fuel Farm & Terminal Area Fence Project

Attachments: [04-01-19 Airport Funding Switch Between Projects](#)

Airport Advisory Board Chair George Morrison presented an airport project change with a request to transfer funding from the Parallel Taxiway & Apron Project to the Fuel Farm & Terminal Area Fence Project. He explained that the Parallel Taxiway Project cost was set at \$792,000 and the County matched funding at a rate of 10%. The funding for this project was approved in the 2018 budget. However, officials in Raleigh made a change in the project to provide 100% funding for the project. The 10% matching funds for the Fuel Farm Project has not been appropriated and the total cost of the project is \$624,000. A request is being made to transfer funds from the first project to the second project. A request is also being made to accept the \$624,000 bid and for approval to proceed with the work. Commissioner Dix asked for an explanation of a fuel farm. Mr. Morrison explained that the airport has both jet fuel and aviation fuel. The aviation fuel is in a 40-year old underground storage tank. When the project is completed, both tanks will be above ground with a containment area. Fuel will be available 24-hours per day as opposed to the current 8-hours per days availability. Commissioner Rhodes questioned the difference in project costs quoted in an earlier report to the Board and whether something that is needed is being left out. Mr. Morrison answered that there is nothing that is being left out. Commissioner Dix asked why the 24-hour operation is important. Mr. Morrison answered that many times fuel is needed after hours for not only regular air traffic, but also for emergency evacuations and forestry emergency services. With no further questions, Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to transfer project funds in the amount of \$79,200 as requested. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the request to proceed with work on the project. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

PRES 19-69 9:55 AM - Librarian Suzanne Moore & Interim County Manager Adam Stumb - Library Parking Lot Expansion

Attachments: [04-01-19 Library Parking Lot Expansion](#)

County Librarian Suzanne Moore updated the Board regarding the Library parking lot expansion. She recently met with the town manager of West Jefferson regarding the

project. The bids have been updated and the commissioners were provided with copies of the bids. Ms. Moore told the Board that the Library will pay for the expansion costs up front and will invoice the County for their portion of the costs. Interim County Manager Adam Stumb updated the Board on maintenance of the lot and paving the entrance road. The street is in the city limits and will not be included in the paving costs. A memorandum of understanding for maintenance has been drawn up to address snow removal and maintenance of the fence. The Town will maintain the fence. Large maintenance issues will be brought back before the Board with a cost share agreement. The last quote was passed out to the Board. Mr. Stumb explained the three bids received for the project. The cost to the County will be \$15,769. Commissioner Rhodes questioned safety factors associated with the location of the fence. He also stated there is a \$9,000 difference in costs for the metal fence and the split rail fence. County Librarian Suzanne Moore explained that safety was a concern for the Town due to the close proximity of the fence to the park. Chairman McNeill stated concern for future damage to a metal fence and the ability to repair the fence. Commissioner Dix asked how long the wooden rails would last. Chairman McNeill answered that with proper maintenance they should last a long time. Commissioner Rhodes asked where the steps would be located. Suzanne Moore answered that the tree will be reinforced and the steps built on the side. Commissioner Rhodes questioned the height of the wall. Suzanne Moore answered that she does not have the plans with her. Commissioner Rhodes asked if the steps were necessary. Suzanne Moore answered that the steps would make easier access into the park. Commissioner Rhodes stated that the total cost for the project is \$47,305 and would be split equally between the Town, the County, and the Library, with the cost to the County being \$15,769. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the Library parking lot expansion project to include a hemlock split rail fence and by appropriating funds in the amount of \$15,769 from the FY2018/19 Contingency Fund. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

BUDGET AMENDMENT

April 1, 2019

General Fund:

To increase the appropriation for Public Buildings from \$1,683,094 to \$1,698,863; this increased appropriation of \$15,769 to be made by reducing the Contingency Fund by \$15,769.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

PRES 19-70 10:05 AM - Interim County Manager Adam Stumb - Civic Center Parking Lot Repairs

Attachments: [04-01-19 Civic Center Parking Lot Repairs](#)

Jane Lonon, representing the Civic Center, and Interim County Manager Adam Stumb, spoke to the Board about repairs that are needed to the Ashe Civic Center parking lot. Mr. Stumb told the Board that several storm drains have collapsed and to repair the damage, new drainage boxes and pipes are needed at a cost of \$9500. Commissioner Dix asked how much the Civic Center is being used. Jane Lonon answered that the Civic Center is used on a daily basis. She explained safety issues regarding the needed parking lot repairs. Commissioner Rhodes stated concern for the safety of patrons at night events. Ms. Lonon stated that the Civic Center will pay \$5000 of the repair costs.

Adam Stumb added the the County's portion would be appropriated from the Maintenance Department budget. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to appropriate the balance of the repair project from the Maintenance Department budget. Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

PRES 19-71 10:10 AM - Interim County Manager Adam Stumb - Helton Community Center Easement

Attachments: [04-01-19 Helton Community Center Easement](#)

Interim County Manager Adam Stumb told the Board that the map included in the agenda packet information highlights the easement agreement at the Helton Community Center. He provided an explanation of the history and information regarding the location of the easement. He stated that the easement is strictly for access purposes and does not include maintenance of the easement. Property owners have been using the easement but a formal agreement was never created. Commissioner Dix questioned if anyone had contacted the adjoining property owner next to the creek. He believes that if they are in agreement with the easement that their signature should be added. Commissioner Rhodes asked County Attorney Kilby if the road is state-maintained. Attorney Kilby answered that it is state-maintained and the survey indicates the road is located within the boundaries of the Wilcox and County properties. The easement has been in place and used for many years by property owners. Attorney Kilby expects the County will not want to expend funds for a survey. Commissioner Dix questioned who made the request for the easement. Attorney Kilby answered that Rusty Estes who acquired the adjoining property did and that Mr. Estes would need to determine if an addition is needed to the easement. Vice Chairman Sands questioned what Building 187 indicates on the map. Attorney Kilby answered that is the Wilcox property. With no further discussion, Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to proceed with the easement agreement for the Helton Community Center. Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

PRES 19-72 10:15 AM - Interim County Manager Adam Stumb - WCC Expansion & Ashe County High School Covered Walkway

Attachments: [04-01-19 WCC Expansion Covered Walkway](#)

Interim County Manager Adam Stumb spoke to the Board about the covered walkway that was discussed in the early planning for the Wilkes Community College (WCC) expansion project. The walkway would connect Ashe County High School and WCC. Recently members of the School Board expressed concern that the walkway is an important piece of the project and needs to be included in the expansion project. The County will work with WCC on this project as set forth in the following conditions: 1) Any mention of the covered walkway would be removed from the lease between WCC and Ashe County Schools; and 2) WCC will enter into an agreement with Ashe County for construction of the covered walkway at a point where it would fit into the overall construction plans, similar to how it is worded in the current draft lease between WCC and Ashe County Schools; and 3) WCC would commit \$50,000 towards construction of

the covered walkway; and 4) Funds remaining, if any, from the up to \$8 million committed by Ashe County to the Ashe Campus project would go towards the covered walkway; and 5) Ashe County would cover the costs of the covered walkway, less the \$50,000 and remaining funds from the up to \$8 million committed assuming the cost of the covered walkway is \$150,000, and if there were \$40,000 remaining from the County appropriation to the Ashe Campus, then the County would cover the remaining \$60,000 - \$40,000 remaining + \$50,000 WCC commitment + \$60,000 remainder from Ashe County = \$150,000. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to proceed with adding the walkway to the project under the conditions listed. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. Chairman McNeill stated the importance that the cost for the walkway would not exceed the amount quoted. With no further comments, the motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

[PRES 19-73](#) 10:20 AM - New River Fire Department Board Chair Tim Porter & Chief Leonard Houck - Request for Approval of Tax Rate Increase

Attachments: [04-01-19 New River VFD Tax Rate Increase Request](#)

New River Fire Chief Tim Porter and Assistant Chief Josh Steelman were present to request approval of a tax rate increase for the New River Fire Department. Chief Porter explained the events behind the need to make a request for a three-cent increase in the fire tax. The fire department replaced a rescue truck two years ago. Shortly thereafter a drain under the the parking lot had to be replaced and then the entire parking lot had to be reworked. Next, the fire department tanker blew an engine, then the rear end of the tanker and the transmission had to be repaired, and the tank cracked. The truck is going to have to be replaced and the cost for a plain tanker is \$283,000. Chief Porter told the Board that a public hearing has been held to gain citizen input regarding the tax increase as required by General Statute. There was no opposition brought forth at the public hearing. Chairman McNeill stated that no action will be taken on the fire tax increase at this time but the request for approval of the new tax rate for New River Fire Department will be considered during the upcoming budget work sessions.

GENERAL SESSION

Appointments

[APP 19-14](#) Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) Appointment

Attachments: [04-01-19 JCPC Appointment](#)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to appoint Jennifer Despain as the Sheriff's Office representative on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC). Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Appointment(s) Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements**IX. Executive Session****ES 19-7****Executive Session - G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5) - Acquisition of Real Property**

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss the acquisition of real property as provided by G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5). Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Chairman McNeill declared the Board into Executive Session at 11:03 a.m. and out of Executive Session at 11:54 a.m. with no action taken.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes,
Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Dix made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m. Commissioner Rhodes seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

For: 5 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes,
Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

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

Ann J. Clark, MMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board