

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, August 5, 2019

6:00 PM

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

Chairperson Todd McNeill

Vice Chair William Sands

Commissioner Larry Rhodes

Commissioner Paula Perry

Commissioner Larry Dix

BUSINESS SESSION**I. 6:00 PM - Meeting Called to Order at the Ashe County Courthouse**

Chairman McNeill called the meeting of the Ashe County Board of Commissioners to order at 6:00 p.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 Dix led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Perry offered the opening prayer.

III. Approval of Minutes

[MIN 19-40](#) July 15, 2019 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [08-05-19 July 15, 2019 Regular Session Minutes](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the July 15, 2019 Regular Session Minutes as written. 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

[MIN 19-41](#) July 15, 2019 Executive Session Minutes

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the July 15, 2019 Executive Session Minutes as written. 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

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to adopt the agenda with the addition of an executive session to discuss legal issues and the acquisition of property, and the addition of a request from veterans in Ashe County for funding to purchase five eight-inch bronze markers for the Veterans' Memorial at the 1904 Courthouse. 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

V. Public Comment

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

VI. Presentations**[PRES
19-135](#)**

6:05 PM - Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Monthly Tax Report & Settlement Report

Attachments: [08-05-19 Monthly Tax Report & Settlement Report](#)

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Monthly Tax Report and FY2018-19 Settlement Report. He explained that NCGS 105-373 mandates that the tax collector report settlement taxes for each fiscal year. Information regarding the Settlement Report was provided to the Board along with the Monthly Tax Report ending June 30, 2019. Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the FY2018-19 Settlement Report and the Monthly Tax Report ending June 30, 2019. 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

**[PRES
19-136](#)**

6:10 PM - Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Charge Tax Administrator with Collections of the 2019 Real & Personal Property Taxes

Attachments: [08-05-19 Tax Administrator Charge to Collect 2019 Taxes](#)

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert explained to the Board that NCGS 105-321 requires the commissioners to charge the tax administrator with the collection of yearly real and personal property taxes. For FY2019-20, the beginning levy for all county taxes, fire taxes, solid waste disposal fees, and other fees and penalties is \$20,722,153.26. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to charge Tax Administrator Chris Lambert with collection of real and personal property taxes for FY2019-20. 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
19-137](#)**

6:15 PM - Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Offer to Purchase Surplus Property

Attachments: [08-05-19 Tax Office-Offer to Purchase Surplus Property](#)

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert presented an offer to purchase property that was foreclosed on during 2017. The property was advertised and one bid was received in the amount of \$10,000. If the bid is approved by the commissioners, the property will be advertised. Additional bidders will have 10 days to upset the bid. The property consists of a campground that was started in the 1990s and never developed. The tax value on the property is approximately \$96,000. Since the property is a foreclosure, it is exempt and property taxes are not being collected. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to accept the \$10,000 bid and continue the upset bid process. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. Commissioner Dix stated that he believes the County can get more than \$10,000 for the property. Chairman McNeill then called for a vote to the motion on the floor. The motion passed 4-1, with Commissioner Dix voting in opposition.

Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Sands, Commissioner Rhodes and Commissioner Perry

Against: 1 - Commissioner Dix

[PRES](#)
[19-138](#)

6:20 PM - Karoline Keith - Presentation of Dick Miller Leadership Program

Karoline Keith, a senior at Ashe County High School and participant in the Dick Miller Leadership Program, spoke to the Board highlighting the program and explaining to the Board what the program has meant to her. The Leadership Program is sponsored by the Ashe County Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Keith is also the Ashe County Youth Voice Representative for this year's North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Annual Conference.

[PRES](#)
[19-139](#)

6:30 PM - Chris Robinson - StartUp Ashe Program

Attachments: [08-05-19 StartUp Ashe](#)

Chris Robinson provided information on the StartUp Program which is being developed to attract entrepreneurs to our three-county community which includes Ashe County, Alleghany County, and Wilkes County. Two years ago, Wilkes Community College began a strategic planning process that was focused on economic mobility. The StartUp Ashe website will heavily market our community attributes to build entrepreneur opportunities in our area. The entrepreneurial program at Catawba Valley Community College is being used as a guideline for the program. Entrepreneurial opportunities will be advertised to people that live in our area and to those that live outside our community. Chris Robinson told the Board that Ashe County has a tremendous asset in our Broadband access which will allow us to offer entrepreneurs the opportunity to telecommute. The cost for this program for one year is \$50,000 spread across the three-county area. A request is being made for Ashe County to support Startup Ashe with an appropriation of \$5000 for the first year. The total monies needed from Ashe County is \$15,000 with donations being made from Wilkes Community College, Skyline, BREMCO, Ashe County Job Development, and the Chamber of Commerce. Wilkes County will contribute \$20,000 for the program and Alleghany County will contribute \$10,000. The program will be reviewed after one year to determine if it is feasible to continue. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to appropriate \$5000 from the Economic Development budget for the Ashe StartUp Program. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

[PRES](#)
[19-140](#)

6:40 PM - Steve Mochen & James Killian - Request for Approval of Road Closure on August 31, 2019 from 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. for Blue Ridge BBQ & Brewfest

Attachments: [08-05-19 Road Closure Request for Blue Ridge BBQ & Brewfest](#)

Steve Mochen made a request for approval of closure of one lane on Highway 16 for approximately 1/4 mile in front of Blue Ridge Dinner Theater on August 31, 2019 from 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. for the Blue Ridge BBQ & Brewfest. Mr. Mochen explained that during the event, deputies will be stationed at each end of the portion of road that is

narrowed to one lane to control traffic. Expectations are for approximately 2000 people to attend the event. The criteria set forth by DOT requires approval from the Sheriff's Office and the county commissioners before DOT denies or approves the lane closing. Chairman McNeill verified that officers will be off duty and paid through the organization. Sheriff Howell told the Board that he is hesitant because of the large number of people expected to attend and since this large of an event has not happened before, there is nothing to compare to. The sheriff reassured the commissioners that emergency vehicles will be able to get through the area if needed. Steve Mochen told the Board that he has experience in traffic control for large events from his 35 years experience on his previous job. Commissioner Rhodes stated concern for the fact that Highway 16 is a major highway and it would be narrowed down to one lane to accommodate only one business. Chairman McNeill stated that he believes the lane closure would be like a utility company working on utility lines. The event will be good for the community but he wants DOT safety standards met. Commissioner Dix believes this control provides safety for the event and for county citizens but wants to hear from the Highway Patrol and DOT. Vice Chairman Sands wants to know if the Highway Patrol is in favor of the lane closure before he can approve the request. Commissioner Dix stated that the event will happen whether the Board agrees or not and the request being made will only make the road safer. Commissioner Perry stated support for the event and added that the group is following all of the requirements made by DOT. She believes it will be a good event for the County and by trying it will be the only way to know if an event this size will work. Commissioner Dix made a motion to provide a letter of acknowledgement and approval of the request to DOT if all safety guidelines are met. Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-2, with Commissioners Rhodes and Sands voting in opposition.

Approved

For: 3 - Commissioner McNeill, Commissioner Perry and Commissioner Dix

Against: 2 - Commissioner Sands and Commissioner Rhodes

PRES
19-141

6:55 PM - Bob Phipps - Request for Funding to Pay for Brass Markers for the Veterans' Memorial at the 1904 Courthouse

Attachments: [08-05-19 War Memorial at 1904 Courthouse](#)

Bob Phipps and Bernie Lee, on behalf of veterans in Ashe County, made a request for the County to fund \$1500 to pay for five eight-inch bronze markers representing the five military branches that will be displayed on the Veterans' Memorial at the 1904 Courthouse. Commissioner Dix made a motion to appropriate \$1500 from the Contingency Fund for the bronze markers as requested. 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

GENERAL SESSION

Other Items for Consideration

MISC 19-15 Approval of 2020 Holiday Schedule

Attachments: [08-05-19 Holiday Schedule 2020](#)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve the 2020 Holiday Schedule for County offices. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Approved

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

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

IX. Executive Session

[ES 19-15](#)

G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5) Acquisition of Property & G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) Legal Issues - Appalachian Materials Lawsuit

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion for the Board to enter into Executive Session as provided for under G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) to discuss legal issues pertaining to the Appalachian Materials lawsuit and G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5) to discuss the acquisition of property. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Chairman McNeill declared the Board into Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. and out of Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. with no action taken.

Approved

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

X. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. 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

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