

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, August 19, 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**

Vice Chairman Sands called the Regular Meeting of the Ashe County Board of Commissioners to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Ashe County Courthouse. Chairman McNeill arrived at approximately 9:05 a.m.

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 19-42](#) August 5, 2019 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [08-19-19 August 5, 2019 Regular Session Minutes](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the August 5, 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 19-43](#) August 5, 2019 Executive Session Minutes

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the August 5, 2019 Executive Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Dix seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Perry made a motion to adopt the agenda with the addition of an update on the upcoming Blue Ridge BBQ & Brew Festival. 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](#)
[19-142](#) 9:05 AM - DSS Director Tracie Downer - Monthly Departmental Update

Attachments: [08-19-19 Child Support Awareness Proclamation 2019](#)
[08-19-19 DSS Collections Dashboard](#)

Director Tracie Downer presented the monthly departmental report for DSS. She highlighted statistics for the Department of Social Services for the month of June and provided an update on staffing. Her department came in significantly under budget for the fiscal year which ended June 30, 2019. A proclamation was read that was adopted by Governor Roy Cooper proclaiming August 2019 as Child Support Awareness Month. Director Tracie Downer asked the Board to adopt a similar proclamation for Ashe County. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to approve a resolution designating August 2019 as Child Support Awareness Month. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Next, Belinda Gilley, child support supervisor, gave a brief update on her department.

[PRES](#)
[19-143](#)

9:20 AM - Community Paramedic Committee - Community Paramedic Project

Attachments: [08-19-19 Community Paramedic Program](#)

Cody Darnell, project director, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Community Paramedic Project which began in the fall of 2018. A \$375,000 grant from the Duke Endowment to Ashe Memorial Hospital makes this program possible. There are three entities that work together on the project: Ashe Memorial Hospital who provides program oversight and handles the financial aspects of the project; Wilkes Community College provides training and certification for paramedics; and Ashe Medics provides services to operate the program. The way the program works is that a primary care provider or a service organization will make referrals to the program to provide services in the home. Someone from the community paramedic program meets with the patient and makes an assessment of what the person needs and then communicates with the physician. They also work with community organizations if services are needed for food or medicine. The program provides a win-win situation for the patient and the community through decreased Medicaid costs, decreased use of the emergency room, and the patient has help gaining services they need for care.

[PRES](#)
[19-144](#)

9:35 AM - Jim Hallsey & Joe Shimel - Mountains to Sea Trail Presentation

Attachments: [08-19-19 Mountains to Sea Trail](#)

Jim Hallsey presented information on the Mountains to Sea Trail which was started in the late 70s. This year the trail has been officially completed. The Trail runs from the mountains, through the Piedmont, and continues to the Coastal Plain and Outer Banks. There are 30 miles of trail in Ashe County. The South Ashe section is 16 miles long and runs from Deep Gap on the Parkway & Hwy 421 to Horse Gap on the Parkway and Highway 16. The North Ashe section is 14 miles long and runs from Horse Gap to Laurel Springs at the Parkway and Hwy 18.

Joe Shimel, superintendent of New River State Park, invited everyone to come out for a hike on September 7th at 10 am at the EB Jeffress Park on the Blue Ridge Parkway in celebration of the 42nd birthday of the Mountains to Sea Trail.

[PRES](#)
[19-145](#)

9:50 AM - Volunteer Coordinator Terri Hopkins - Volunteer Initiative Program Update

Attachments: [08-19-19 Volunteer Initiative Update](#)

Volunteer Coordinator Terri Hopkins updated the Board on the Volunteer Initiative Program that the commissioners support. She highlighted the Volunteer Awards Ceremony that was held in April to recognize many of the volunteers in our county. Terri is involved with the annual school supply drive that was just completed. Another project is the annual canned food drive that helps families during the winter months. The Children's Christmas Project will begin receiving referrals next month. Another project that the volunteer coordinator would like to work on is creating a Facebook page containing volunteer information. The Board was in agreement with starting a Facebook page for the volunteer program.

PRES
19-146

10:00 AM - Eric Morley - Carolina Timberworks Update

Eric Morely, owner of Carolina Timberworks, a timber-framing business and the newest company in the Beaver Creek Industrial Park, gave an update on progress being made with their building. They have met all of their scheduled timelines so far. Mr. Morely asked the commissioners if a street sign could be placed at the entrance to the industrial park. He offered to donate a timber frame for the sign. The interim county manager will research this before a decision is made by the commissioners.

PRES
19-147

10:10 AM - Sheriff's Office Chaplain Greg Topczewski - Detention Center Transportation Program Presentation & Funding Request

Attachments: [08-19-19 Detention Center Transportation Program](#)

Greg Topczewski, chaplain at the Ashe County Sheriff's Office, made a request for funding to pay for transportation expenses for inmates that are housed at the Ashe County jail through the State Misdemeanor Confinement Program that have no one to pick them up when they are released from jail. He explained that jailers vet individuals based on commissary funds available and family visits to determine if the inmate is indigent. Most inmates have family or someone to pick them up when released, but there are a few that have no money, are homeless, and have no one to pick them up. Ashe County Transportation Authority will drive the individual to their home area. Local churches have donated \$500 for transportation when the need arises. The request is for an appropriation of \$1000 for the remainder of this year. Vice Chairman Sands stated that he worked at the Ashe County Sheriff's Office for 20 years and has never seen a need for transport other than by deputies. He also stated concern for the liability with a program like this. Director of Ashe Transportation Amanda Roten answered that they have cameras in vehicles and they have liability insurance for their vehicles. Chairman McNeill questioned if there are measures in place so that people would not take advantage of the program. Captain Linda Carrow stated that the jailers would exhaust all available options first. Commissioner Dix would like to talk with the sheriff to see if a solution can be found without having to use taxpayer monies. Commissioner Rhodes stated that the county attorney needs to research this and provide input to the Board to make sure the County will not be liable if they make an appropriation of County funds. The commissioners agreed that this is morally the right thing to do but want more research into this before making a decision.

PRES
19-148

10:20 AM - Interim County Manager Adam Stumb - Introduction of Parks & Recreation Director Kevin Anderson

Interim County Manager Adam Stumb introduced the County's new Parks & Recreation Director Kevin Anderson. He comes from the Board of Education where he has worked

as assistant finance director for 10 years.

[PRES](#)
[19-149](#)

10:30 AM - Cooperative Extension Director Travis Birdsell - High Country Commercial Kitchen Update

Attachments: [08-19-19 High Country Commercial Kitchen](#)

Cooperative Extension Director Travis Birdsell provided information to the commissioners on the opening of the High Country Commercial Kitchen at Family Central. He told the Board that the first week of operation was very busy with usage of almost 50 billable hours. The Cooperative Extension Office will schedule usage of the kitchen and will handle billing for usage. The kitchen will be a regional kitchen with the closest commercial kitchen of this size being located in Asheville. Director Travis Birdsell told the Board that a marketing plan is currently being put into place. An explanation of the fee schedule was also provided to the Board. In order to use the kitchen, a permit is required from the Ashe County Health Department and from North Carolina Health & Human Services. A Serv Safe certificate is required along with a \$1 million General Liability Insurance Policy. Plans are underway to hold an open house at the High Country Commercial Kitchen this fall.

[PRES](#)
[19-150](#)

10:40 AM - Cooperative Extension Director Travis Birdsell - Afterschool Care in Ashe County

Attachments: [08-19-19 Afterschool Care in Ashe County](#)

Cooperative Extension Director Travis Birdsell updated the commissioners on the 4-H Afterschool Program. He explained that there is a big need for afterschool care in the County. The County program opened in 1988 and is licensed through the State. Last year care was provided at the three elementary schools and the middle school. The program at the middle school was discontinued this year due to low attendance. Two sites that offered afterschool care chose to discontinue their programs this year. This caused the numbers to increase in the 4-H Afterschool Program. Mr. Birdsell explained that there are 31 spaces at Blue Ridge Elementary School but they are unable to offer the program at this school due to no staff to operate the program. They are advertising for a site coordinator and a teacher through the NC Works Career Center and plans are to open this site when qualified staff is hired.

[PRES](#)
[19-151](#)

10:50 AM - Sheriff Howell - Request to Reclassify Budget Line Item "Donations & Contributions" to "Donations-Restricted"

Attachments: [08-19-19 Sheriff's Office Budget Line Item Change Request](#)

No Action Taken

[PRES](#)
[19-152](#)

10:55 AM - Sheriff Howell - Request to Add Budget Line Item "Donations-Community"

Attachments: [08-19-19 Sheriff's Office Budget Line Item Change Request](#)

No Action Taken

[PRES](#)
[19-153](#)

11:00 AM - Sheriff Howell - Request to Accept & Deposit Donation Funds into Budget Line Item "Donations-Restricted"

Attachments: [08-19-19 Sheriff's Office Budget Line Item Change Request](#)

Sheriff Howell told the Commissioners that a donation was received for the purchase of a K-9 and requested the money be placed into the Restricted Donations line item for the Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to deposit donation funds for a K-9 into the Restricted Donations line item. 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](#)
[19-157](#)

11:05 AM - James Killian - Blue Ridge BBQ & Brewfest Update

James Killian and John Smyre, representing the Blue Ridge BBQ & Brewfest, updated the Board on the upcoming event. A proclamation was presented to the Board that was signed by Governor Roy Cooper proclaiming the Blue Ridge BBQ & Brew Festival as an official State Barbeque Championship in North Carolina. Mr. Killian told the Board that he has a meeting with NCDOT officials tomorrow regarding the request to narrow Highway 16 to one lane during the festival.

GENERAL SESSION

Appointments

[APP 19-18](#) Ashe County Joint Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care Reappointment - Angela Taylor

Attachments: [08-19-19 Long Term Care Committee Reappointment](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to reappoint Angela Taylor to the Ashe County Joint Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care for a three year term. Commissioner Rhodes 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

[APP 19-19](#) West Jefferson ETJ Board - Reappointment of Delmar Roten & Appointment of Rick Price

Attachments: [08-19-19 West Jefferson ETJ Board Appointments](#)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to reappoint Delmar Roten and to appoint Rick Price to the West Jefferson Extra Territorial Jurisdiction Board. Commissioner Perry 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

[APP 19-20](#) Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Reappointment - Donnie Johnson

Attachments: [08-19-19 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Appointment](#)

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to reappoint Donnie Johnson to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for a two year term. Commissioner Dix 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 19-16](#)

G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5) Acquisition of Property

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to enter into Executive Session as provided for under G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5) to discuss the acquisition of property. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Chairman McNeill declared the Board into Executive Session at 11:15 a.m. and out of Executive Session at 12:40 p.m., with no action taken.

Approved

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

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Rhodes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 12:45 p.m. 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

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