

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

9:00 AM

Commission Meeting Room

County Commission

*Chairperson Todd McNeill
Vice Chair Larry Rhodes
Commissioner William Sands
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 9:03 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

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

III. Approval of Minutes

[MIN 20-3](#) January 6, 2020 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [01-21-20 January 6, 2020 Regular Session Minutes](#)

Commissioner Sands made a motion to approve the January 6, 2020 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

IV. Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Dix made a motion to adopt the agenda with the addition of discussion regarding acquisition of property during Executive Session. Commissioner Perry 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 20-6](#) 9:05 AM - DSS Director Tracie Downer - Monthly Departmental Update

Attachments: [01-21-20 DSS Statistics 11-19](#)

Department of Social Services Director Tracie Downer presented the monthly departmental update. Statistics for November 2019 were reviewed. Ms. Downer updated the Board on energy assistance programs, daycare subsidy funding, and foster care statistics in the County.

PRES 20-7 9:15 AM - Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Monthly Tax Report**Attachments:** [01-21-20 Monthly Tax Report](#)

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert presented the Monthly Tax Report for November 2019 and December 2019. Vice Chairman Rhodes made a motion to approve the report as presented. 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 20-8 9:20 AM - Executive Director Kitty Honeycutt - Chamber of Commerce Update**Attachments:** [01-21-20 Chamber of Commerce Update](#)

Chamber of Commerce Director Kitty Honeycutt provided a PowerPoint presentation with an update of Chamber activities. She introduced Chamber staff present at the meeting. Ms. Honeycutt told the Board that the Chamber now has 446 members. She highlighted work of the Member Services Committee, the Education Committee, the Business and Community Development Committee, and the Tourism Committee. Also highlighted were upcoming events scheduled in 2020, the Visitor's Center, and The Venue.

PRES 20-9 9:30 AM - Stacey Howell with Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission (BROC) - Approval of Community Services Block Grant Application, #210 & #212 for Emergency Assistance, and #210 & #212 for Family Self-Sufficiency**Attachments:** [01-21-20 BROC CSBG Grant for FY2020-21](#)

Stacey Howell with Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission (BROC) presented a request for approval of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Application #210 and #212 for Emergency Assistance and #210 and #212 for Family Self-Sufficiency. Ms. Howell provided an explanation of, and funding for, the two programs. Vice Chairman Rhodes made a motion to approve the CSBG Application as presented. 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 20-10 9:40 AM - Director Jeff Fissel - Ashe Civic Center Update

Ashe Civic Center Director Jeff Fissel introduced members of the Civic Center Board. He highlighted the wide variety of cultural arts programming offered at the Civic Center and recent events held at the Civic Center. A committee was recently formed to stay on top of building needs at the Civic Center.

GENERAL SESSION**Ordinances for First Reading**

FRAN 20-1 M & J Disposals - Solid Waste Franchise Renewal - First Reading

Attachments: [01-21-20 M&J Disposals Franchise Renewal-First Reading](#)

Environmental Services Director Scott Hurley provided information regarding M & J Disposals and the solid waste disposal services they provide in the County. Vice Chairman Rhodes made a motion to approve the solid waste franchise renewal at first reading for M & J Disposal. Commissioner Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval

Approved at First Reading

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

Appointments**APP 20-1** Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Reappointments

Attachments: [01-21-20 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Reappointments](#)

Vice Chairman Rhodes made a motion to approve the reappointments of Carol Coulter, Marc Payne, and Steve Johnson to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. 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

APP 20-2 Farmland Preservation Advisory Board Appointments

Attachments: [01-21-20 Farmland Preservation Advisory Board Appointments](#)

Commissioner Sands made a motion to appoint Andy Powers and Alex Church to the Farmland Preservation Advisory 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

Resolutions**RES 20-2** Consideration of a Resolution Declaring Ashe County, NC a Second Amendment Sanctuary and Comments from the Public Regarding the Resolution

Attachments: [01-21-20 Resolution Declaring Ashe County, NC a Second Amendment Sanctuary](#)

After a ten minute recess, Chairman McNeill opened the floor for the public to make comments regarding the Resolution Declaring Ashe County, NC a Second Amendment Sanctuary.

Sheriff Howell was the first person to speak stating that he is in favor of the resolution declaring Ashe County a Second Amendment Sanctuary. He teaches concealed carry classes and stated that there are a lot of good people willing to carry guns.

Tracy Miller from Glendale Springs stated that he is in favor of the resolution. The Second Amendment gives us the right to protect ourselves. He is speaking to protect our freedoms.

Donna Apple from Ashe County is not in favor of the resolution. She does not believe the resolution should be used as a political ploy. Ms. Apple stated the Second Amendment has been in place for 231 years. The movement for sanctuary cities started in Virginia. She experienced first hand a school shooting.

Matthew Marquard from Lansing stated that the resolution should not be necessary since we have the Second Amendment. Constitutional rights are given by our Creator and not from the government. He is in favor of the resolution.

Ken Gregory who lives in West Jefferson is in favor of the resolution because we live in an evil environment. It is foolish to take away God-given rights because someone acts against our rights. He opposes those that stand to take away our rights.

John Littlewood from Helton stated support for the resolution which he believes is well written. He spoke of undermining the Constitution. When violence occurs, guns are blamed, not the individuals. More and more counties are establishing themselves as Second Amendment Sanctuaries.

Jonathan Jordan from Crumpler stated support for the resolution. When he served as a representative in Raleigh, he helped institute the Castle Doctrine. Mr. Jordan has a problem with the term "Sanctuary" which has been used for illegal immigration. He believes that to restrict the Constitution is to restrict the basic form of government.

Matthew Leach who works in the district attorney's office stated support for the resolution. He is running for a seat as district court judge. He stated that it is important to elect conservative judges so that this type of resolution is not needed.

Dwight Kerr who lives in Ashe County believes that schools need to teach the Constitution. If this was done we would not need the resolution. The Constitution is not a living document because it does not change. He spoke of the importance that children are taught our nation's history.

Carlos Dominguez who lives in Ashe County was born in Cuba. His family moved to the United States in 1965 when he was 12. In Cuba, children were taught that socialism is good. While he was living in Cuba, officials went house to house confiscating guns. He believes that we need to protect the Constitution and the Second Amendment.

Joe Miller from Ashe County stated support for the resolution. He also stated agreement with the comment made by Jonathan Jordan regarding use of the word "Sanctuary". He spoke of violence at a Connecticut daycare where teachers were restricted on what they could do. They had to throw themselves in front of a door to keep the criminal from coming into the building. People need the right to protect life and property.

Mike Halworth from West Jefferson stated that the Second Amendment is under attack. He is in favor of the resolution and stated that he carries a gun because he cannot carry a cop.

Jeff Phillips from Jefferson stated concern that the resolution does not go deep enough because the resolution does not include red flag laws. The resolution should call for a

"Constitutional Sanctuary".

Rose Price from Creston is in favor of the resolution. She takes in kids that parents do not want due to being on drugs. She told the Board of an incident at her home where she needed a gun to protect herself and the children.

Susan Carter from Ashe County told the Board about her son's suicide. She wants to be able to protect her son's child.

Chris Taylor from Jefferson stated that he is in favor of the resolution. We have rights granted by the Second Amendment. But we need to encourage friends and family to stand up and fight for our rights. Things get passed in our nation because good people stand by and do nothing.

Claudia McDonald who lives in Ashe County moved to the United States from Nicaragua in 1978. She stated that we live in the greatest country in the world. People that were born in the United States sometimes get complacent. Ms. McDonald is in agreement that the word "Sanctuary" should not be used in the resolution. She agrees that we need to make sure our children learn the Constitution and we need to protect our rights.

Patty Pike from Laurel Springs explained a personal experience she had with gun violence. She believes that if someone had a gun two people would not have been shot. She told the Board that her family has concealed carry permits.

With no further comments from the public, Chairman McNeill opened the floor for each commissioner to comment on the resolution.

Commissioner Dix made a motion to adopt the resolution as written. Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Adopted

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

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

IX. Executive Session

[ES 20-2](#)

G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6) Personnel Issues

Commissioner Sands made a motion for the Board to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues as provided for under G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (6) and to discuss the acquisition of property as provided for under G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (5). Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Chairman McNeill declared the Board into Executive Session at 10:54 a.m. and out of Executive Session at 11:33 a.m. with the following action being taken. Vice Chairman Rhodes made a motion to approve the employment contract of County Manager Adam Stumb. Commissioner Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

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 11:34 a.m. Commissioner 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