

# **Ashe County**

*150 Government Circle  
Jefferson, NC 28640*



## **Meeting Minutes - Final**

**Monday, February 15, 2021**

**9:00 AM**

**Commission Meeting Room**

### **County Commission**

*Chairperson Todd McNeill  
Vice Chair William Sands  
Commissioner Chuck Olive  
Commissioner Jerry D. Powers  
Commissioner Jonathan Jordan*

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

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

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

**II. Pledge of Allegiance/Opening Prayer**

*Commissioner Jordan led the Pledge of Allegiance and Commissioner Powers offered the opening prayer.*

**III. Approval of Minutes**

[MIN 21-8](#) February 1, 2021 Regular Session Minutes

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 February 1, 2021 Regular Session Minutes](#)

*Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the February 1, 2021 Regular Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

[MIN 21-9](#) February 1, 2021 Executive Session Minutes

*Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the February 1, 2021 Executive Session Minutes as written. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

**IV. Adoption of Agenda**

*Commissioner Powers made a motion to adopt the agenda with the addition of a Department of Social Services budget amendment to PRES 21-21 and 21-22. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Adopted**

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

**V. Public Comment**

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

**VI. Presentations**

[PRES 21-18](#) 9:05 AM - High Country Council of Governments Regional Planner Michelle Ball - Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus Program (CDBG-CV) Procedures & Policy Adoption

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 CDBG-CV Procedures & Policy Adoption](#)

*High Country Council of Governments Regional Planner Michelle Ball presented Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus Program (CDBG-CV) compliance procedures and policies for adoption by the Board. The procedures and policies are federally-required for the use of \$900,000 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds awarded to Ashe County and designated to assist low-income to moderate-income households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with utility payments. Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to adopt the procedures and policies as presented. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*  
**Approved**

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

[PRES 21-19](#) 9:15 AM - County Manager Adam Stumb - Approval of High Country Council of Governments Administrative Contract

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 HCCOG Administrative Contract](#)

*County Manager Adam Stumb presented for the Board's approval an administrative contract for the High Country Council of Governments to administer the aforementioned CDBG-CV grant funds from February 1, 2021 through October 1, 2023. Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the administrative contract as presented. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*  
**Approved**

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

[PRES 21-20](#) 9:20 AM - Chief Building Inspector Jeff Cornett - Building Inspections Update

*Chief Building Inspector Jeff Cornett presented a Building Inspections update, noting how the number of building permits in 2020 compared to those in 2019. He shared that the number of new residential permits had increased from 103 in 2019 to 118 in 2020, and permits for residential additions or remodels had increased by 9, despite the financial impacts of COVID-19 and the high costs of building materials. Chief Inspector Cornett also shared that new commercial permits and commercial alteration/renovation permits had both decreased, from 19 to 10 and 31 to 21, respectively.*

[PRES 21-21](#) 9:25 AM - DSS Director Tracie Downer - Monthly Departmental Update

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 DSS Monthly Stats Report](#)

*DSS Director Tracie Downer presented departmental statistics for December 2020. She noted an upcoming NC Medicaid transformation and explained the Enrollment Broker process. Ms. Downer also shared that open enrollment for Medicaid Managed Care will run from March 15, 2021 through May 14, 2021.*

[PRES 21-22](#) 9:30 AM - DSS Director Tracie Downer - Request to Change Agency Attorney Grade

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 DSS Attorney Grade Change Request](#)

*DSS Director Tracie Downer presented a request to lower the agency attorney grade level to 80 from 81 in keeping with County policy. She requested that this change take effect once the position is vacated by retirement or other means. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the request as presented. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

[PRES 21-30](#) 9:30 AM - DSS Director Tracie Downer - Budget Amendment

*DSS Director Tracie Downer presented the following budget amendment for the Board's approval. Commissioner Olive made a motion to appropriate the CIP and LIEAP funds as requested. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**BUDGET AMENDMENT**  
**February 15, 2021**

*To increase the department of Social Services from \$8,621,571 to \$8,671,571; this increased appropriation of \$50,000 to be made with additional allocations from the state of \$20,000 Crisis Intervention Payment (CIP) Funds and \$30,000 Low-Income Energy Assistance Payment (LIEAP) funds.*

**Approved**

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

[PRES 21-23](#) 9:35 AM - County Librarian Suzanne Moore - Appalachian Regional Library 2020 Accomplishments & 2021 Plans

*County Librarian Suzanne Moore provided the Board an overview of 2020 activities and plans for 2021. She discussed shifts to curbside and online services as a result of COVID-19, including sending seeds from the Seed Library by mail, creating STEAM Maker Mondays videos for kids, and holding a book club for veterans via Zoom. She shared that 818 new patrons were registered during September's Library Card Sign Up Month. The Ashe County Public Library is currently offering curbside and online services only but will reassess operations each month.*

[PRES 21-24](#) 9:50 AM - Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Monthly Tax Report

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 Monthly Tax Report](#)

*Tax Administrator Chris Lambert presented the monthly tax report for January 2021. Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the report as presented. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

**PRES 21-25** 9:55 AM - Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Board of Equalization and Review Schedule

*Tax Administrator Chris Lambert presented the following dates for the 2021 Board of Equalization and Review meetings: April 5 and April 19, 2021. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the dates as presented. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

**PRES 21-26** 10:00 AM - Exemption/Exclusion Specialist Kelsey Wagoner - Request for Approval to Review Untimely Present-Use Value Application

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 Untimely Present Use Value Application](#)

*Kelsey Wagoner, tax exemption and exclusion specialist, presented a request for approval of an untimely Present-Use Value application. She explained that North Carolina General Statutes mandate that an untimely application must be brought before the Board. The individual making the request had not provided any cause for being untimely. Vice Chairman Sands made a motion, based on the information presented and past action taken by the Board, to deny the request for approval of the untimely Present-Use Value application. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

**PRES 21-27** 10:05 AM - Parks and Recreation Director Kevin Anderson - Approval to Offer Youth Spring Sports

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 Parks & Rec - Approval to Offer Youth Spring Sports](#)

*Parks and Recreation Director Kevin Anderson presented to the Board a plan to hold youth spring sports in 2021 and a COVID-19 liability waiver. He shared that after discussing options with the Ashe County High School and Ashe County Middle School athletic directors, Parks and Recreation colleagues across the region, and AppHealthCare Director Jennifer Greene, he feels that Ashe can safely offer youth baseball, softball, T-ball, and soccer utilizing social distancing and COVID-safety protocols. Commissioner Powers raised concerns about players being required to wear masks at all times, and Commissioners Olive and Jordan suggested an amendment stating that players should wear masks when social distancing cannot be achieved but masks must be worn by all coaches, officials, and spectators. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the request to offer youth spring sports contingent on the requested amendment to the protocols. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval. Commissioner Olive made a motion to approve the COVID-19 waiver as presented. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved as Amended**

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

**PRES 21-28** 10:10 AM - Sheriff Phil Howell - Request to Transfer Funds for Inmate Transport Van Purchase

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 Sheriff - Request for Transfer of Funds](#)

*Sheriff Phil Howell and Detention Captain Linda Carrow made a request for funds to replace the inmate transport van. Sheriff Howell explained that the existing transport van is fourteen years old and something the department has hoped to replace, but Captain Carrow shared that particularly since COVID-19, the need for a new van has become pressing. Sheriff Howell stated that the quoted cost for a new van and the required insert would total \$50,974. Finance Director Sandra Long said \$50,000 could be appropriated from the Contingency Fund for the purchase of the van and the insert, if the Sheriff's Department could supply the remaining funds. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve an appropriation from the Contingency Fund as detailed below to purchase a new inmate transport van and insert. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

#### **BUDGET AMENDMENT**

*February 15, 2021*

*To increase the appropriation for the department of Corrections from \$2,368,567 to \$2,418,567; this increased appropriation of \$50,000 to be made by reducing the Contingency Fund from \$250,000 to \$200,000.*

**Approved**

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

**PRES 21-29** 10:15 AM - County Manager Adam Stumb - Announcement of Advertisement for Highway 163 Convenience Center Site Bids

**Attachments:** [2-15-21 163 Convenience Site - Specs and Bid Sheet](#)

*County Manager Adam Stumb provided the Board with an update on the Highway 163 convenience center site. He shared that the County is ready to accept bids on the construction of the site, which will require paving, concrete, earth work, and construction of a perimeter fence. He noted that landscaping is not in the initial bid but will be added later.*

### **GENERAL SESSION**

#### **VII. Commissioner Comments**

#### **VIII. Announcements**

#### **IX. Executive Session**

#### **.X. Adjournment**

*Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 a.m.*

*Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

**Approved**

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

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**Todd McNeill, Chairman**

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**Ashley G. Honeycutt**  
**Clerk to the Board**