

Ashe County

*150 Government Circle
Jefferson, NC 28640*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Monday, November 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 Olive led the Pledge of Allegiance and Vice Chairman Sands offered the opening prayer.

III. Approval of Minutes

[MIN 21-44](#) November 1, 2021 Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [11-15-21 November 1, 2021 Regular Session Minutes.pdf](#)

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the November 1, 2021 Regular Session Minutes as presented. Commissioner Powers 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 21-45](#) November 1, 2021 Executive Session Minutes

Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the November 1, 2021 Executive Session Minutes as presented. Commissioner Powers 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 Olive made a motion to adopt the agenda with one addition of a discussion regarding the merger of the Ashe County Civic Center with the Ashe County Arts Council. Commissioner Jordan 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.

Cooperative Extension Director Travis Birdsell issued a public invitation to the White House Christmas Tree Send-Off Ceremony at the Ashe County Courthouse on

Wednesday, November 17, at 1:30 p.m. He added that the White House Christmas tree had been selected from Peak Farms and growers Rusty and Beau Estes. Mr. Birdsell stated that NC Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler, Drew Christy from the Office of the Governor, representatives of US Congress members, and NC Director of Parks & Recreation Dwayne Patterson were among those scheduled to attend the send-off.

No further comment was offered.

VI. Presentations

[PRES](#)
[21-160](#)

9:05 AM - DSS Director Tracie Downer - Monthly Departmental Updates

Attachments: [11-15-21 DSS Monthly Stats Report.pdf](#)

DSS Director Tracie Downer shared with the Board that the number of children in foster care was coming down and that arrearages were on track. She noted that in a review of 12 cases in the Work First area, one case was found to have insufficient documentation, so additional training and a program improvement plan would be implemented. She also provided an overview of other training being provided to agency staff. Ms. Downer shared with the Board that the department had received approval for the program redistribution request for the Community Development Block Grant CARES (CDBG-CV) grant, meaning that additional eligible uses would now be allowed for those funds.

[PRES](#)
[21-161](#)

9:15 AM - Sheriff Phil Howell - Request for Reinstatement of Employee's Sick Leave

Attachments: [11-15-21 ACSO Employee Sick Leave Reinstatement.pdf](#)

Chairman McNeill shared with the Board that the Sheriff was unable to present the request but had discussed it with County Manager Adam Stumb and Human Resources Director Angie Eggers. County Manager Stumb added that this type of request had previously been approved, as long as the employee's service was within five years of the request for reinstatement. Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the request as presented. Commissioner Powers 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](#)
[21-162](#)

9:20 AM - Generations Ashe Senior Center Director Glenda Luther - Ashe County Volunteer Initiative Program

Attachments: [11-15-21 Ashe County Volunteer Initiative Program.pdf](#)

Generations Ashe Senior Center Director Glenda Luther introduced to the Board Jennifer Richardson, the new volunteer coordinator for Ashe County. Ms. Luther added that Ms. Richardson has more than 16 years of experience in coordinating volunteers in our community. Ms. Richardson greeted the Board, adding that she served on the Volunteer Advisory Board since 2012 and had been the chairperson since 2016.

[PRES](#)
[21-163](#)

9:30 AM - Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill - Budget Amendment

Attachments: [11-15-21 Emergency Management Budget Amendment.pdf](#)

Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Gambill presented for the Board's approval the following budget amendment. She explained that the County was a sub-recipient of a \$20,500 Homeland Security grant to help fund a morgue trailer. Commissioner Olive made a motion to approve the amendment as requested. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

BUDGET AMENDMENT

November 15, 2021

To increase the department of Emergency Management from \$172,113 to \$192,613; this increased appropriation of \$20,500 to be made with an additional allocation of \$20,500 from the NC Dept. of Public Safety with the award of an NC Emergency Management Homeland Security Grant.

Approved

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

[PRES](#)
[21-164](#)

9:40 AM - Tax Administrator Chris Lambert - Monthly Tax Report

Attachments: [11-15-21 Monthly Tax Report.pdf](#)

Tax Administrator Chris Lambert presented the monthly tax report for October 2021. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the report 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](#)
[21-165](#)

9:45 AM - Economic Development Director Cathy Barr - Industrial Development Fund Grant Resolution

Attachments: [11-15-21 Industrial Development Fund Grant Resolution.pdf](#)

Economic Development Director Cathy Barr presented for the Board's approval an Industrial Development Fund Grant Resolution. Vice Chairman Sands made a motion to approve the resolution as presented. Commissioner Powers 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](#)
[21-166](#)

9:50 AM - Planning Director Wesley Barker - Budget Amendment

Attachments: [11-15-21 Planning Budget Amendment.pdf](#)

Planning Director Wesley Barker presented for the Board's approval the following budget amendment. He explained that the County's Code Enforcement Officer is retiring, and the

amendment would allow for the new officer to begin work with a few days to train with the existing officer. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve the amendment as requested. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

BUDGET AMENDMENT

November 15, 2021

To increase the department of Planning from \$203,183 to \$207,633; this increased appropriation of \$4,450 to be made by decreasing the Contingency Fund by \$4,450 from \$257,000 to \$252,550.

Approved

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

[PRES
21-167](#)

10:00 AM - County Manager Adam Stumb - Property Acquisition

County Manager Adam Stumb presented for the Board's approval a contract to purchase a property as previously discussed in closed session. He explained that the County had an exciting opportunity to purchase a tract nearly 150 acres in size and adjoining Ashe Park. He added that County Attorney John Kilby had reviewed the contract and cited no concerns. County Manager Stumb noted that this was a rare opportunity to acquire the property for later development by Parks & Recreation to include hiking and biking trails, picnic areas, additional parking, and more. Chairman McNeill stated that the addition of this property would more than triple the size of the park. Commissioner Olive made a motion to approve the contract as presented. Commissioner Jordan 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
21-168](#)

10:10 AM - County Manager Adam Stumb - Budget Amendment

County Manager Adam Stumb shared with the Board that Finance Officer Sandra Long was able to take the \$10,000 earnest money for the Ashe Park-adjacent property contract out of legal funds, so no budget amendment was needed.

GENERAL SESSION

Appointments

[APP 21-9](#)

West Jefferson Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) Planning Board Reappointment

Attachments: [11-15-21 ETJ Reappointment.pdf](#)

Commissioner Powers made a motion to reappoint Zeb Gambill to the West Jefferson Planning Board as an ETJ member for an additional three-year term. Commissioner Olive seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.

Appointment(s) Approved

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

APP 21-10 High Country Rural Planning Organization Rural Transportation Advisory Committee Reappointment

Attachments: [11-15-21 RPO RTAC Reappointment.pdf](#)

Commissioner Olive made a motion to reappoint Chairman McNeill to the High Country Rural Planning Organization Rural Transportation Advisory Committee. Vice Chairman Sands seconded the motion. The motion passed with Commissioners Sands, Olive, Powers, and Jordan voting in favor. Chairman McNeill abstained from voting, resulting in a vote in the affirmative.

Appointment(s) Approved

For: 4 - Commissioner Olive, Vice Chairman Sands, Commissioner Powers and Commissioner Jordan

Abstain: 1 - Chairperson McNeill

Other Items for Consideration

MISC 21-11 Road Petition - Bird's Eye View Lane

Attachments: [11-15-21 Road Petition - Bird's Eye View Lane.pdf](#)

Ken Lynn, president of the Pine Swamp Estates Homeowners Association, shared with the Board background on the Bird's Eye View Lane request, noting that the road had been built and maintained to state standards. Commissioner Powers made a motion to approve a road petition to add Bird's Eye View Lane to the state-maintained road system. 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

MISC 21-12 Employee Retirement Recognition

Chairman McNeill announced that Director of Elections John Shepherd is retiring at the end of November. Commissioner Powers presented Mr. Shepherd with a plaque on behalf of the Board, and the Board expressed appreciation for Mr. Shepherd's years of service.

MISC 21-13 Discussion Regarding the Ashe County Arts Council/Ashe County Civic Center Merger

Commissioner Powers requested more discussion on the Ashe County Arts Council/Ashe County Civic Center merger. Chairman McNeill said that he thought the merger was already in process, and Ashe County Arts Council Board Chair Wesley Barker answered that the boards of both organizations had voted on the issue with majorities of each voting in favor. Chairman McNeill provided background information on what led to the merger, noting that there was previously a lot of overlap between the two organizations that could be made more efficient and would be more appropriately funded with occupancy tax rather than general fund revenues. Commissioner Powers asked for clarification that funds allocated to the Civic Center would not be used for Arts Council

salaries, and Mr. Barker responded that that was correct and that the auditor and finance officer were aware of the money being designated for the maintenance and upkeep of the Civic Center.

VII. Commissioner Comments

VIII. Announcements

IX. Executive Session

X. Adjournment

*Commissioner Powers made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 a.m.
Commissioner Jordan seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous approval.*

Approved

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

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

Ashley G. Honeycutt
Clerk to the Board