POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Public Hearings & Regular Meeting
September 15, 2025 - 5:00 PM
Bryant H. Womack Justice & Administration Building
40 Courthouse Street Columbus, NC 28722
MINUTES

Present: Chairman Yoder, Vice-Chairman Moore, Commissioner Beiler, Commissioner Melton, and Commissioner Hargett. Also in attendance were County Manager Pittman, County Attorney Berg (virtually), Clerk to the Board Freeman, and citizens.

1. Public Hearing

   A. Call to Order the Public Hearing - The purpose of the Public Hearing is to take public comment on the proposed new road names; North Kingswood Drive – Private Road – Off of King Stepp Road – SR 1306, Treeano Trail – Private Road – Off of Garrett Road – SR 1140, Ayden Drive or Leigh Lane – Private Road – Off of Henry Thompson Road – SR 1369, Blue Mountain Lane – Private Road – Off of Sandy Plains Road – SR 1005, Contractor Way – Private Road – Off of Sandy Plains – SR 1005. The Public Hearing was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin.

   Attorney Berg was present for questions.

   B. Citizen Comments

   There were no citizen comments.

   C. Adjourn Public Hearing

   Commissioner Melton moved to adjourn the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Call to Order the Regular Meeting - Chairman Yoder.

3. Invocation - Vice-Chairman Moore

4. Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Melton

5. Approval of Agenda

   A. Items may be added or removed at this time.

   Manager Pittman requested that agenda item 8.G. be removed from the regular agenda. He also requested the addition of a closed session.

   Vice-Chairman Moore moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of the August 18, 2025 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes.

B. Schedule a Public Hearing for proposed new road names to be considered on Monday, October 20, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Bryant H. Womack Justice & Administration Building.

C. Vaya Health Quarterly Financial Report for the period ending June 30, 2025.

D. Tax refund request through August 4, 2025, in the amount of $18,217.04.

E. Tax refund request through August 4, 2025, in the amount of $250.28.

F. Award Service Contract to Stott Construction Inc., and Approval of Budget Amendment, and Purchase Order Request for the Recreational Complex Paving Project.

G. State Cashflow Loans for Disaster Response Activities to Local Governments (Round 3).

H. Budget Amendment to Appropriate Contingency to Fund Half of New Assistant Forest Ranger Position.

I. Budget Amendment and Project Budget Ordinance to appropriate General Fund balance and transfer to the Capital Project Fund for management fees to Rostan for the Hazard Mitigation Project Grant.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items.

There were no citizen comments.

8. Regular Agenda Items

A. Consideration and Approval of the proposed new road names subsequent to the Public Hearing - Attorney, Jana Berg.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to approve the proposed new road names, including the revision of "Ayden Drive" to "Ayden Lee Drive," with the spelling corrected to "LEE" instead of "LEIGH." seconded by Commissioner Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Proclamation for Prisoners of War (POW) and Missing In Action (MIA) - Joyce Preston, President Polk County Memorial VFW Auxiliary to VFW Post #9116 read the proclamation.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the proclamation for Prisoners of War and Missing in Action, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Military Suicide Awareness Proclamation - Commander Mike Collins read the proclamation.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the Military Suicide Awareness Proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Resolution in Remembrance of September 11, 2001 - Ethel Collins, Secretary Polk County Memorial Auxiliary to VFW Post #9116 read the resolution.

Commissioner Beiler moved to approve the Resolution in Remembrance of September 11, 2001, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Polk County Veterans Services Update - Commander Mike Collins.

Commander Mike Collins said that VFW Posts #9116 and #10349 have combined into one joint meeting. The meeting is now held at Post #10349 — the Womack Bradley Polk County Memorial VFW in Mill Spring, located off NC Highway 108.

F. Resolution Recognizing Emergency Workers During Hurricane Helene - Vice-Chairman Moore read the resolution.

Commissioner Hargett moved to approve the Resolution Recognizing Emergency Workers during Hurricane Helene, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

~~G. Polk County HR Policy Annual Review and Update - Tommy Oakman, Human Resources Officer.~~ *Removed during item 5.A, agenda approval.*

H. Subdivision Ordinance and Recombination of Existing Parcels Discussion - Chairman Yoder.

Chairman Yoder requested that Cathy Ruth, Planning and Economic Development Director, provide an explanation of the recombination process and its requirements as shown in the Polk County Subdivision Ordinance. Mrs. Ruth stated that a recombination may be requested when two parcels of land are being reconfigured without the creation of a new lot. To comply with the ordinance, the resultant lots are equal to or exceed the standards of the subdivision minimum lot size requirements. She explained that a few residents have recently requested recombinations that could not be approved because the lots did not meet the minimum lot size requirements. Because of this, Chairman Yoder requested that the current wording regarding recombination in the Subdivision Ordinance be sent to the Planning Board for review, without creating a greater non-conformity.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to send the wording for recombination size requirements in the Subdivision Ordinance to the Planning Board for review, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

I. Budget Amendment to Appropriate Fund Balance for EMS Salaries - Manager Pittman, and Michael Crater, EMS Director.

Mr. Crater gave a presentation, a copy of which is hereby incorporated into the minutes by reference.

Manager Pittman presented the differences in starting pay for EMT's and Paramedics between Polk County, Buncombe County, and Henderson County. He explained that Polk County's starting pay is less than Henderson and Buncombe County which is believed to be a large reason why EMS is struggling with employee retention. Manager Pittman requested the approval of a budget amendment which will appropriate fund balance to increase EMS salaries. Manager Pittman said that if this budget amendment is approved, it will support a 10% increase to the starting pay for EMTs bringing the starting rate from $19.21/hour to $23.31/hour, and a 20% increase for Paramedic's starting pay bringing the starting rate from $23.92/hour to $30.14/hour.

Commissioner Beiler moved to approve the budget amendment, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items.

There were two citizen comments.

10. Volunteer Board Applications

A. Animal Cruelty investigators - There are six vacancies and three applicants; Sarah McDonald, Shyla Foster, and Ted Owen.

B. Appearance Commission - There are four vacancies and two applicants; Joe Cooper, and Patricia Sahertian.

C. Economic and Tourism Development Commission - There are two vacancies and two applicants; Marc Blazar, and Steve Modlin.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to appoint the proposed volunteer board applicants as presented seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Commissioner Comments.

The Commissioners thanked everyone who attended the meeting, and addressed their concerns regarding recent events.

12. ***Closed Session.***

A. ***Motion to go into closed session for the purpose of Attorney-Client Privilege***

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to go into closed session for the purpose of Attorney-Client privilege, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. ***Motion to return to open session.***

Commissioner Melton moved to return to open session, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to approve the budget amendment to fund legal for fees Van Winkle Law Firm – Attorney/Client Privilege, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Kennedy Freeman

Kennedy E Freeman
Clerk to the Board

Myron Yoder

Myron Yoder
Chairman