



Caswell County Board of Commissioners

144 Court Square, Yanceyville, NC 27379

www.caswellcountync.gov | ph: 336-694-4193 | fax: 336-694-1228

Commissioners Tim Yarbrough, Frank Rose, John Claggett, Finch Holt, Greg Ingram, Tony Smith, Brian Totten

BOC MINUTES | Regular Meeting | August 18, 2025, 6:30pm, Historic Courthouse

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Yarbrough, Chair
Frank Rose, Vice Chair
John Claggett
Finch Holt
Greg Ingram
Tony Smith
Brian Totten

OTHERS PRESENT

Scott Whitaker, County Manager
Melissa Williamson, Deputy County Mgr.
Russell Johnston, County Attorney

The Board of Commissioners (BOC) for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in a regular meeting scheduled on Monday, 8/18/25, at 6:30pm at the historic courthouse in Yanceyville, North Carolina.

Welcome: Chairman Yarbrough called the meeting to order. All were invited to pause for a moment of Silent Prayer and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent agenda: This included the meeting agenda and open session minutes for 8/4/25. A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Vice Chair Rose to approve the Consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

Recognitions: Commissioner Smith recognized Piedmont Community College for receiving financial aid from the State of North Carolina in a Pell Grant to be able to offer up to \$3,000 per student to attend PCC. The annual household income must be less than \$80,000.

Commissioner Ingram recognized that the 8/5 National Night Out event was a great success and thanked everyone who participated and Mr. Love for doing a great job. Vice Chair Rose echoed Commissioner Ingram's comments.

Public comments: No one signed up to speak.

Presentation items:

"2023 Community Health Assessment" and "2024 State of the County Health" presentations: Ms. Nicole Gibson, Health Educator with Caswell County, shared the background about the community health assessment. The assessment is conducted every four years, and it engages the community and identifies key health issues and provides decision makers with information necessary to make informed public health decisions. Key points shared included priority 1 (structured activities for youth) and priority 2 (improved race relations). There was a population change of 0.27% increase. The median age is 47 years old. The vulnerable population (less than 5 years old or above 65) is 26.3%. The Hispanic population has increased to 4.8%. The median income for Caswell is \$56,999. The high school graduation rate for 2020–21 was 86.9%. Poisoning and unintentional falls were the main reasons for children's ER visits. Peer counties were Greene and Chatham. The 2019 priorities remained the same for the current assessment.

For the "2024 State of the County Health" report, Ms. Gibson stated that progress has been made on the priorities. Progress for structured activities for youth include the development of the Youth Council, trauma training is being conducted, and four workgroups have been established to provide youth programming to make sure all Caswell County youth have safe spaces. Progress on race relations included trauma informed building trainings (racial equity training and community dialogue on racial healing).

Ms. Gibson highlighted emerging issues since the last report. In North Carolina for the 2022–23 flu season, there were 196 deaths in comparison to the 2023–24 season where there were 319 deaths, and 63% of the deaths were considered to be the vulnerable population, while 26.3% or 6,000 residents of the County's population are considered vulnerable.

The "My Healthy Futures Alternative to Suspension Vaping Education Program" is being implemented in some middle and high schools. If students are caught vaping, they are offered the program in ISS to reduce the amount of time missed in school. Follow-up education sessions are offered through the Health Department and Alcohol and Drug Services.

Vice Chair Rose mentioned the unemployment rate in Caswell and commented that the out-of-work category was 26.9% and seemed high. Ms. Gibson responded that the data was collected in 2022, and it may have changed.

Action items:

2026 Caswell Comprehensive Plan—PTRC proposal and contract: Manager Whitaker recapped the discussion that occurred at the last meeting. The Plan is a budgeted item and will be an update of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan with the addition of a land use plan (LUP) component. Attorney Johnston had created a contract for Board consideration. Whitaker suggested that the Board may want to add the proposal as an exhibit. Attorney Johnston stated that he received the proposal and incorporated the terms of the proposal into the contract. Cost will not exceed \$48,000. The term would last through 8/31/26 based on the proposal, which indicates a 12-month process from beginning to end. Manager Whitaker added that it will be a long process because of the amount of public engagement. Staff will be coming back to the Board to ask for approval of a slate of steering committee members.

Chairman Yarbrough asked if there would be three (3) public meetings. Planning Director Watlington concurred that there would be three public meetings and two additional community events. The public engagement will be distributed throughout the County. Chairman Yarbrough commented that he would like to cover each quadrant.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Rose and seconded by Commissioner Ingram to proceed with the budgeted "2026 Caswell Comprehensive Plan" project using PTRC for the services outlined per the attached proposal and contract at a cost not to exceed \$48,000. The motion carried unanimously.

Watlington noted that the plan does not have anything to do with zoning specifically.

Flock Safety license-plate-reader cameras—Sheriff's Office contract: Manager Whitaker recapped the contract proposal that involves six license-plate-reader cameras and that it does not involve any new money. Cameras will be located strategically around the County. DEA funds will be split up into two budget years: \$21,900 for first year and \$18,000 for next year.

Chairman Yarbrough asked if there would be DEA money on both years. Manager Whitaker responded that if JAG grant money isn't awarded, there will still be enough DEA funding. The Chair questioned if there will be enough funding past the two years, and Commissioner Ingram commented that DEA money usually comes in every year, but it's hard to determine an exact amount.

Commissioner Smith asked about the breakdown between hardware and software. He suggested that hardware should be a one-time deal to purchase the cameras, and software may be renewable as technical support. The Manager will clarify.

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Totten to proceed with the Flock Safety contract for the LPR equipment and services outlined in the proposal at a first-year cost of \$21,900 with the understanding that the second-year cost will be \$18,000 for a total of \$39,900. These amounts will be paid for with existing DEA forfeiture funds or a JAG grant, if awarded. The motion carried unanimously.

Hazard Mitigation Plan and resolution: Manager Whitaker stated that the current plan is valid until 9/30/25. Part of the value of the Plan is to ensure that the County receives state and federal assistance in case of a natural disaster. Sections 7 and 9 of the Plan are more applicable to Caswell. North Carolina Emergency Management is requesting approval prior to the 9/30 deadline.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Rose and seconded by Commissioner Ingram to adopt a resolution for the Northern Piedmont Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan as submitted to NCEM and FEMA. The motion carried unanimously.

FY25-26 budget amendment #7—Parks and Rec playground and equipment: Manager Whitaker explained that this item deals with different past approved grants that were in place before the current budget. The amendment will reallocate funds to this year's budget to be expended for past approved grants for installation of a playground and dog park, and purchase of obstacles, benches, a water fountain, baseball/softball equipment. The total amount is \$7,766.14. The money was approved but not allocated.

Chairman Yarbrough inquired about the Professional Services category. The Manager responded that it involved installation of equipment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Claggett and seconded by Commissioner Ingram to approve Budget Amendment #7 in the amount of \$7,766.14 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Items:

FY25-26 budget amendment #8—Community Computer Access Grant (Ag Extension laptops): Manager Whitaker indicated that this is a new item related to the County being awarded a computer access grant from Danville Regional Foundation. The purpose of the grant is to extend digital access so that more Caswell residents can gain skills and stay connected. Cooperative Extension is the fiscal agent, and the award is \$25,000 to be used for laptop purchases, outreach, and training. It is expected to conclude in March 2026. The grant is reimbursement based and matching funds are provided by the Piedmont Triad Regional Council. He added that the grant was not anticipated when the budget was developed.

The Cooperative Extension Director Hoesli explained that the grant is a collaborative effort between the local office and the Caswell Education Collaborative. Given improved Internet service within the County, there's a need to supply devices and train residents. Participants will have to complete 20 hours of training before getting a computer, and only one computer per household is allowed. Once completed, the grant will pay for computers at a cost of approximately \$200 per device. Seven laptops will initially be purchased, and leftover funds will provide 2-3-month memberships at CoSquare. The program will operate on a first-come, first-served basis. Proof of residency will be required. Manager Whitaker informed the Board that they could waive their rule and vote tonight, if desired.

Commissioner Totten asked how participants will know about the program. Director Hoesli replied that once funds are approved, there will be a news article and registration process.

Commissioner Smith commented that PCC has good programs. It is a win/win for the County.

Attorney Johnston stated that if the Board desired to suspend the rules, it would be Rule 27. The Board may suspend the rules with a 2/3 vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Totten to suspend Rule 27. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Ingram to approve Budget Amendment #8 in the amount of \$25,000. The motion carried unanimously.

Appointments/re-appointments:

1) Library Advisory Board; 2) Planning Board; 3) Hunting and Wildlife Advisory Committee—Darrell Freeland: Manager Whitaker stated that the item involves one applicant, Darrell Freeland, and he applied for the Library Advisory Board, Planning Board, and Hunting and Wildlife Advisory Committee. His application and resume were included in the packet.

The Library Advisory Board has not had enough members for a quorum. After recent appointments, the Board is planning to meet, but there is still an opening.

For the Planning Board, Attorney Johnston, Manager Whitaker, and Planning Director Watlington discussed the Planning Board membership. The UDO states there should be nine members; however, the Board has traditionally operated with eight members. The Chair, Manager, Planning Director, and Environmental Health Director are all ex-officio. The Manager asked for clarity on how ex-officio membership counts toward the number of members as the policy wasn't clear. The policy indicates that an ex-officio member does not vote. Attorney Johnston recalled that about 10 years ago, the issue came up. At that time, the Chair and the majority of the Board agreed that an ex-officio member of the Planning Board could vote. In 2020, the policy was updated so that an ex-officio member doesn't vote. Attorney Johnston will do more research and formulate a response. Typically, there would be an advertisement for vacancies on boards and that has not happened for the Planning Board because those terms do not expire until December. No action will be taken until a determination is made.

Hunting and Wildlife had just met this summer for the first time in recent times. Billy Carden was appointed in February and there's still a vacancy, along with four members including Commissioner Holt as an ex-officio member. Chairman Yarbrough asked why Commissioner Holt is allowed to vote as an ex-officio member when other commissioner appointments on other boards cannot. The Manager spoke the individual board compositions and how each board didn't have an establishing document that addressed the issue well. He said that some jurisdictions have a document for each Board that specifies membership, but Caswell does not, and the CAB Policy was insufficient in this regard. Chairman Yarbrough stated that there needs to be clarity and consistency in commissioners voting. Manager Whitaker stated that some boards have commissioners as ex-officio and some are regular (voting) board members. Chairman Yarbrough stated the need to work on uniformity. Attorney Johnston stated that the State statutes allow ex-officio members to vote, unless by-laws state otherwise. The Manager will go through the directory and compare commissioner roles to share with the Chair. Chairman Yarbrough asked the Manager to identify ex-officio versus regular members.

It was the consensus of Board to take no action on the Planning Board since it had not been advertised.

A motion was made by Commissioner Claggett and seconded by Vice Chair Rose to appoint Darrell Freeland to the Library Board. The motion carried unanimously with only Commissioner Smith voting no.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hunt and seconded by Chairman Yarbrough to appoint Darrell Freeland to the Hunting and Wildlife Board. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports, updates, or comments:

County Manager Updates: Water system: The Manager stated that it will be a slow process for the Yanceyville to repair and rehab its water filters. The current set up of buying emergency water from Danville will be in place through at least October or November.

Staff recruitment: Interviews were being conducted for the Finance Officer position, and a new employee was hired in Payroll. He was also currently advertising for the Deputy Clerk position.

OSHA inspection: The final OSHA inspection report is expected in mid-September. Safety training and improvements are on-going, and the new Safety Committee would be meeting the following day.

Emergency Management: The department is undertaking an inventory of assets and equipment, and the Manager will report on the findings later.

Pelham Industrial Park: The utilities access road is complete and seems to be functioning well (water drainage).

Farmer Lake: The Saturday Fishing Day was a big success.

County Attorney Updates: County Attorney Johnston said the County filed a tax foreclosure for civil action entitled Caswell County vs. Juanita Patterson for delinquent taxes owed in the Pelham township (7.5 acres).

Commissioner Comments: Vice Chair Rose asked Attorney Johnston about the letter concerning reimbursement for water from Danville. The Attorney responded that the County drafted an agreement and presented it to the Town. There have been no updates.

Commissioner Claggett stated that Budget work session minutes from 5/28 and 6/2 are not accessible on the website and asked how much the County is paying for contracted service for minutes. Manager Whitaker responded that traditionally budget workshop agendas and minutes haven't been placed on the website; however, he'd recently asked IT to create additional meeting slots and he was in the process of getting all meeting info on the website.

Commissioner Holt asked for clarification on the suspended rules. Chairman Yarbrough indicated that they are only suspended for the earlier item and rules are only suspended on an individual basis.

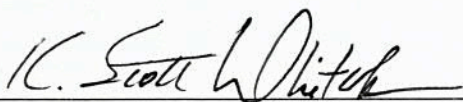
Commissioner Smith asked for an update on FY24 audit. Manager Whitaker replied that the County is still on track to have the 2024 audit completed by the end of the month with the exception of the financial statements that would carry over into September. The goal will be to have the FY25 audit completed on time. Commissioner Smith also asked the Manager to provide a copy of the Code of Ethics to all members.

Chairman Yarbrough asked if the new ambulance had arrived. The Manager thought it had and stated that photos and a press release will be forthcoming. Chairman Yarbrough read announcements and upcoming events. Vice Chair Rose planned to attend the upcoming joint-jurisdictions meeting.

Closed Session: Commissioner Ingram made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Rose, to adjourn to Closed Session to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3). The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: Commissioner Totten moved, seconded by Commissioner Ingram, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm.

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Respectfully submitted by Michelle Parker (*external Clerk contracted to prepare minutes on behalf of Caswell*),



K. Scott Whitaker
Clerk to the Board



Tim Yarbrough
Board Chair