



Caswell County Board of Commissioners

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

BOC MINUTES | Regular Meeting | July 21, 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

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The Board of Commissioners (BOC) for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in a regular meeting scheduled on Monday, 7/21/25, 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 7/7/25. 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 congratulated EMS Director Barry Lynch on his retirement.

Public comments:

Chip Atwater: Mr. Atwater expressed his disappointment of the Board's decision regarding the firing range for the Sheriff's Department. He posed several questions that included reference to the proposed gas line at the landfill. He was concerned that it was close to his property and asked if there is a contract with the telephone tower company and if it's still valid. He thought the foliage would affect the decibel level and wanted to know who will monitor it. He asked about violations, who would be using the range. He requested responses to his questions.

Linda Gauldin: Mountain Hill resident. She spoke about having dealt with fires as a result of a landfill being close to her property and felt it is very dangerous. She added that landfills contain a lot of methane. She spoke of the proposed pipeline project and its dangers.

Laura Pichardo: Pelham resident. She lives at the end of the designated pipeline. She spoke of the shooting range and noise and questioned the designated hours and days. She asked who would attend the meeting in Rockingham and how water will be protected since most are on well water.

Financial Report:

Chairman Yarbrough stated that the report was received in the meeting packet. Manager Whitaker asked if there was any other desired information, please let him know.

Discussion Items:

Reimbursement Resolution—UHF radio equipment, ambulance, ambulance chassis replacement/remount:

Manager Whitaker stated that the information was provided by financial consultants (Davenport). The resolution was prepared with a \$1.2 million estimate for the listed items, and all were accounted for in the budget. Commissioner Claggett questioned whether this was a loan. Manager Whitaker replied that it was not a loan and explained that it was a mechanism to pay the County back—a declaration of intent for projected borrowing in the near future. No action was required at this meeting. Chairman Yarbrough asked commissioners to get with the Manager if there were questions prior to the August meeting.

Action Items:

Sheriff's Office training facility and firing range—policy and procedure changes: Manager Whitaker recapped the Board's approval of the MOU and policy and procedure changes at the last meeting when the Board approved a 65-decibel level maximum. Attorney Johnston made changes to the policy as directed. Changes included language that the Sheriff's Office will notify the Manager's Office when they use the training facility. Regarding decibels, the current language reads "Noise levels measured at the nearest occupied dwelling shall not exceed 65 decibels (dB)." The County Ordinance permits 90 decibels and the Board could consider approving a higher limit.

Commissioner Ingram asked how the decibels can be amended from 65 to 75. Attorney Johnston explained that the Board can dictate the terms on county property. A motion was made by Commissioner Ingram to amend the MOU and policy and procedures for the training facility by changing the decibel level from 65 to 75 and seconded by Vice Chair Rose. Commissioner Smith commented that he was more concerned about monitoring the decibel level. Manager Whitaker asked Planning staff if it owned a meter to monitor the decibel level. The Sheriff's Office will use the site approximately two days a month. Manager Whitaker will ask Planning at intervals to monitor noise. Vice Chair Rose clarified that foliage would be put on top of the berm to help with the sound. Commissioner Ingram confirmed that he had been to many ranges with vegetation on top of the berm. The motion carried 5-2.

Ayes: Commissioners Ingram, Rose, Smith, Totten, and Yarbrough

Nays: Commissioners Claggett and Holt

K&B Consulting economic development contract: Manager Whitaker introduced Ken Bowman with K&B Consulting as a likely source for the economic development work. He noted that an Economic Development Action plan and implementation steps were included in the packet. The contract was provided and \$50,000 had been budgeted for the contracted position.

Ken Bowman introduced himself. He thanked the Board for allowing him to speak and acknowledged serving on the Pennsylvania County Board of Supervisors. He disclosed that he was the previous Economic Development Director for Pennsylvania County and Warren County NC. He served as previous County Manager in Camden, NC, where he also assumed the duties of the Economic Development Director.

Commissioner Smith didn't feel it was as important to make a certain number of hours per week or month, but to be there when needed to meet with developers. Mr. Bowman stated that he set up the economic development program in Warren County. Mr. Bowman noted that the key factor is making sure the infrastructure is in place to recruit businesses. He would build on programs that have already been started.

Commissioner Totten asked Mr. Bowman about the strategy he would use to attract businesses. Mr. Bowman responded that the County needs a good marketing plan and make sure websites are up to date and easily accessible. There also needs to be a point of contact for potential businesses. Reaching out to COGS for local support will also be critical.

Attorney Johnston made changes to the draft contract based on the discussion at the last meeting. Mr. Bowman assured the Board that they will get regular status updates. Chairman Yarbrough asked Mr. Bowman how he would separate his role in working for Pennsylvania County vs Economic Development for Caswell County. Mr. Bowman assured the Board that integrity is a part of his character and he will not do that. Proprietary information will stay in the County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Ingram to approve the Economic Development contract with K&B Consulting. The motion carried 5-2.

Ayes: Commissioners Ingram, Rose, Smith, Totten, and Yarbrough

Nays: Commissioners Claggett and Holt

FY25-26 budget amendment #1—HR Specialist position: Manager Whitaker stated that the position was intended to be included in the budget, but it was oversight that it was not. The amount of \$50,000 would likely be covered by vacancy savings at the end of the fiscal year. Commissioner Smith asked if it will be advertised once approved. The Manager replied that he would like the budget amendment approved so when the new HR Director starts, she could recruit the HR Specialist.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Rose and seconded by Commissioner Totten to approve Budget Amendment #1. The motion carried unanimously.

Creation of economic development capital reserve fund (\$100K from Firebird/Cherokee sale): Manager Whitaker noted that Commissioner Smith suggested moving funds to a new economic development capital reserve fund. The Manager expressed caution initially until he could further research the item. He received positive feedback from Johnna Sharpe. There is approximately \$100,000 from the Firebird/Cherokee land purchase, and the County would commit a portion of the general fund balance toward the new fund. It would still require appropriation and give the Board control. Ms. Sharpe provided a breakdown of components of the fund balance. The process would mean putting money aside with formal action and staff will come back to allocate funds for a specific purpose.

Vice Chair Rose asked what the problem would be with having a line item. Ms. Sharpe responded that it would be designated as part of the fund balance and set up in the accounting system. When it was used, it would be committed for economic development activities.

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Vice Chair Rose to commit \$100,000 of the General Fund fund balance to future economic development with the understanding that any specific appropriation will require Board approval. The motion carried (5-2).

Ayes: Commissioners Ingram, Rose, Smith, Totten, and Yarbrough

Nays: Commissioners Claggett and Holt

FY25-26 budget amendment #2—Pellam Industrial Park access road construction: Manager Whitaker noted that the budget amendment is an economic development request. If a budget amendment is over \$10,000, it comes to Board of two occasions for approval. The Board has the right to waive that. The Manager stated that this item is time sensitive, and the designated vendor would like to start work at the end of the month. The Manager described the location of the road access and shared the history of the Cherokee purchase. Some of the general fund monies have come from timber sales on the property for \$26,000+. The access road will be \$25,000–\$26,000. Manager Whitaker asked the Board to consider waiving the rule to move forward on the project.

Planning Director, Jason Watlington, discussed the property and noted it was predominantly rock. Developers requested to move east away from the property line. Commissioners felt it was too much void land to maintain. In November, the Planning Director presented a 60-foot corridor to the Board and informed them that they could move the road in that area and put the PCC sewer easement in that area. Developers will acquire the expense to move power poles. Developers originally wanted 7–8 acres. Once the Planning Director went back to developers and advised them of the Board's decision, they decided to purchase more acreage that included the rock portion. The Manager noted that engineers had shown the access road going through the property back to the lift station. It was decided that was not going to work because parking would be fenced in and the County needs 24/7 access.

Commissioner Claggett asked if using asphalt had ever been discussed. Staff responded that only gravel had been discussed. Pipe has to be purchased. The County will purchase pipes and take them to the site. A good gravel base and crusher-run will be needed for County access. The Manager added that staff would need a budget amendment for using the timber sales or the committed funds the Board approved could be used.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Rose and seconded by Commissioner Ingram to suspend Rule 27 of the Rules and Procedures. The motion carried (5-2).

Ayes: Commissioners Ingram, Rose, Smith, Totten, and Yarbrough
Nays: Commissioners Claggett and Holt

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Ingram to approve the FY25-26 Budget Amendment #2 to build an access road to the pump station. The motion carried (5-2).

Ayes: Commissioners Ingram, Rose, Smith, Totten, and Yarbrough
Nays: Commissioners Claggett and Holt

Formation of new Caswell Safety Committee: Manager Whitaker explained that this committee is desired as a positive reaction to the Department of Labor and OSHA inspections. He is awaiting the final report. He noted that the Safety Manual is out of date. He shared a slate of proposed employee members that would develop a new safety manual and promote safety training and implement workplace inspections. He proposed that the committee meet monthly during work hours. He would like for the committee to begin in August. There is a mechanism in current Committee policy that certain rules can be waived. The justification for consideration is that the employees have been well vetted by the County. The proposed slate:

1. Clayton Myers (*Sheriff's Office*)
2. Jennifer Eastwood (*Health*)
3. R.D Hayes (*Maintenance*)
4. A.J. Fuqua (*Solid Waste*)
5. Kenneth Everett (*911 Communications*)
6. John Yarbrough (*Emergency Management*)
7. Donnie Powell (*Central Permitting*)
8. Melissa Williamson (*Manager's Office*)

Commissioner Claggett asked if the results of the OSHA visit were available. Manager Whitaker responded that he was awaiting the report and expected it soon, and he would like to have the committee in place prior to the hearing. Vice Chair Rose asked how many times a year safety checks will be performed. The Manager replied that staff is looking at best practices and putting procedures in place. A specific number has not determined yet. Vice Chair Rose would like to include that in the committee work. Commissioner Smith asked if employee training would be expanded. The Manager affirmed. Details of citations were basic to a safety program. This will have to be a priority for the County. The initial focus will be developing a revised Safety Manual.

A motion was made by Commissioner Claggett and seconded by Vice Chair Rose to approve the formation of a new Caswell Safety Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

County Manager Updates: Manager Whitaker talked about the pending Comprehensive Plan update. It is budgeted for \$48,000. Work is going on and he will provide an update soon. Tropical Storm update: The County did not declare a State of Emergency, but Governor Stein included Caswell in its declaration. The Emergency Management Director said there was no need for the County to go back and declare since the Governor declared. There was damage to Milton's water system that was not originally discovered. Danville Utilities agreement: The Manager in Danville was not comfortable with recent County changes and it was being relooked at prior to going to Danville's board. The Attorney and Manager are working on it and it would be brought back soon. The Animal Shelter contract has been very challenging, but parties are still working through it. There were too many differences to bring it back to this meeting, but the Manager hopes to have it ready for the 8/4 meeting.

County Attorney Updates: County Attorney Johnston had no updates during open session.

Commissioner Comments: Commissioner Claggett announced Coffee and Conversations for all Veterans on the fourth Wednesday at the Senior Center at 9:00am.

Commissioner Smith wanted an update on the status of a Golden Leaf applicant. He asked if the audit was on track. Manager Whitaker responded that the audit was still tracking well. There are some components of the 2024 audit that may carry over to the 2025 audit. Chairman Yarbrough read announcements and upcoming events.

Closed Session: Vice Chair Rose made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Ingram, 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 Smith moved, seconded by Commissioner Ingram, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

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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