



Caldwell County
North Carolina
Board of Commissioners Meeting

September 9, 2024 at 6:00 PM
City-County Chambers
905 West Avenue NW, Lenoir

MINUTES

Attendance

Randy Church, Chairman
Mike LaBrose, Vice Chairman
Jeff Branch, Commissioner
Donnie Potter, Commissioner
Robbie Wilkie, Commissioner
Donald Duncan, County Manager
David Lackey, County Attorney

Absent

Abby Rich, County Clerk

Call to Order

Chairman Church called the September 9, 2024, Board of Commissioners meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Public Comment Period

Ms. Connie White came to the podium to speak first. Ms. White told the Board that she is known in the community and has been here for 45 years. Ms. White indicated that she is there to get a leash law for Caldwell County because she had been beaten up twice by Casey Gilbert. She said that Animal Care came and took the first dog after providing assistance, but there is a new dog now and the owner has no power and no water at the home. Ms. White then questioned why Animal Care would allow someone to have a second dog after the owners neglected to take care of the first one. Ms. White continued by describing her neighbors as a nuisance to the community. She indicated that she was simply asking for the new owner to feed and water the dog and was assaulted. Ms. White insisted that this house needed to be gone.

The Board thanked Ms. White.

The next to the podium was Dr. David Lowry. He is the CEO of UNC Health Caldwell. He is there to thank the County Commissioners and County Manager for their leadership in providing outstanding first responders. Dr. Lowry shared a personal story where he had an encounter with local first responders. To say thank you, Dr. Lowry brought a challenge coin from UNC Health Caldwell and gave a challenge coin to each of the Commissioners. Dr. Lowry expressed what the UNC Caldwell challenge coin stands for. Dr. Lowry ended by thanking everyone.

Chairman Church returned to the regular session at 6:09 PM and welcomed everyone in

attendance and watching from home.

Invocation

Chairman Church asked that a moment of silence be held for fallen Kings Creek Firefighter, Zach Hatton.

Pastor Mack Jarvis of Hudson First Baptist Church then led the invocation for those in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Jeff Branch led the Pledge of Allegiance for those in attendance.

Agenda Amendments from the Board, Manager & Public

The County Manager informed the Board of one amendment to the agenda. Item 12 will be moved to item 7.

Vice Chairman LaBrose made the motion to accept the agenda as the County Manager had presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Items

1. Commemorating September 11, 2001

Chairman Church read the Resolution Commemorating September 11, 2001, for those in attendance.

Chairman Church made the motion to adopt the resolution.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Deputy of the Year

Irving Eurto of American Legion Post 29 came to the podium to present the Deputy and EMT of the Year for 2024.

Sheriff Bean came to the podium to present the Deputy of the Year to Corporal Todd Corley.

3. EMT of the Year

EMS Chief Jonathan Cook came to the podium to present the EMT of the Year to Brooke Rozier.

4. Life Saving Valor Awards

Sheriff's Deputy and Animal Care Enforcement Supervisor, John Runion, came to the podium. Deputy Runion provided a summary of an event that occurred at Wilson Creek, which resulted in the unfortunate drowning of mother and child. There were three individuals to be recognized for their lifesaving efforts during this event.

Commissioner Potter read the Life Saving Commendation for Master Officer Jonathan Kiger.

Vice Chairman LaBrose read the Life Saving Commendation for Sergeant Dustin Ethridge.

Commissioner Wilkie read the Life Saving Commendation for Officer Isaac Hannah.

Commissioner Potter made the motion to approve all three commendations.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. Life Saving Award- Animal Care

Animal Care Enforcement Director Richard Gilliland came to the podium to present a Life Saving Award to two individuals, Tabitha Vinson and Samantha Dias-Hernandez, who assisted a gentleman who was the victim of a dog attack. Director Gilliland read the resolution.

Commissioner Wilkie made the motion to adopt the resolution.

The motion carried unanimously.

6. Foothills Regional Airport Presentation

Foothills Regional Airport Director, Brent Brinkley, came to the podium to present updates and other information about the airport.

7. Wing N Biddy Way

The County Manager provided background information about the property and the request for the road naming.

Chairman Church declared the public hearing open.

Commissioner Potter made the motion to postpone the public hearing.

The motion carried unanimously.

8. TXT 2024-1 Text Amendment Request

Ms. Stevens came to the podium to present a request for text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. The requested amendment would remove setback requirements where party walls are utilized in the General Business District. The Planning Board recommended approval of this amendment with the following consistency statement: "The approval of this request is reasonable and in the public interest because the amendment is consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan, which recommends best practices such as adding updates that allow for more flexible service to citizens and keeping ordinances in alignment with health, safety, and welfare of the community within the context of the North Carolina General Statutes." Chairman Church declared the public hearing was open and with no individuals being signed up to speak, the public hearing was declared closed.

Commissioner Branch made the motion to accept the statement as read by Ms. Shelley Stevens.

The motion carried unanimously.

9. RZ 2024-4 R-20 and RA-20 to GB - 2525 Blowing Rock Blvd

Planning Director Shelley Stevens came to the podium to present the 4th rezoning request of 2024. The request is to move from R-20 and RA-20 to General Business. Reginald Ford is the applicant/property owner and the property is located at 2519 and 2525 Blowing Rock Blvd in Lenoir. The potential rezoning aligns with the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Board's recommendation is approval of the rezoning request. Chairman Church declared the public hearing open and with there being no individuals signed up to speak, the public hearing was declared closed.

Commissioner Wilkie made the motion to accept the recommendation as provided by the Planning Board and Ms. Stevens along with the consistency statement.

The motion carried unanimously.

10. Revaluation-Schedule of Values

Tax Administrator Josh Angle called in to the meeting. Mr. Angle provided the County is following N.C.G.S. 105-317C (1) for the schedule of values for the 2025 Revaluation. Mr. Angle informed the Board that the 2025 schedule of values is located on the County website. Mr. Angle provided information and growth statistics for the Board. Mr. Angle then informed the board that he's requesting a motion to schedule a public hearing and requesting the Clerk to publish the notice.

Vice Chairman LaBrose made the motion to approve the schedule of values. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board returned to this item after approving the Consent Agenda to amend the motion. The County Manager proposed the motion to read as "A motion to schedule a public hearing for the schedule of values on October 14, 2024, and for the Board to direct the Clerk to the Board to run an ad in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 105-317 (2)."

Vice Chairman LaBrose amended his motion to read as the County Manager had stated.

The motion carried unanimously.

11. 2014 Tax Release

Tax Administrator Josh Angle requested the release of the 10-year-old delinquent taxes in the amount of \$87,739.58.

Chairman Church made the motion to release the taxes in the amount of \$87,739.58. The motion carried unanimously.

12. Health Department Organizational Chart Revision

Due to a timing conflict, the County Manager requested that the item moved to Item 7, be bumped up to Item 6.

Health Director Anna Cook came to the podium to explain her request for reorganization of the Health Department positions.

Commissioner Potter made the motion for approval of the reorganization of positions. The motion carried unanimously.

13. Sheriff's Office Organizational Chart Revision

Chief Deputy Jonathan Kirby came to the podium to present a request for the reorganization of positions for the Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Potter made the motion to approve the reorganization of positions.

The motion carried unanimously.

Consent

Chairman Church turned the meeting over to the County Manager to review the Consent Agenda items.

14. Soil & Water- STRAP Grant Funding 2024

This revision allows for the County to accept \$500,000 in STRAP Grant funding awarded from the State.

15. Departmental Fund Transfer to Economic Development

The Sheriff's Office will transfer \$72,000 from its budget to the Economic Development budget for leased warehouse space.

16. Inter-Basin Transfer Opposition Funds

This budget revision in the amount of \$60,000 will be used in the fight against the interbasin transfer request from the City of Charlotte.

17. Animal Care and Enforcement- Donated Funds

This budget revision request in the amount of \$3,500 will allow the Animal Care Enforcement Office to use donated funds to purchase rabies vaccines for its semi-annual vaccine clinic and the remaining funds will be used to replace the remaining plastic beds with aluminum frame beds.

18. Sheriff's Office- Replacement Vehicle

This budget transfer in the amount of \$14,300 will allow the Sheriff's Office to use asset seizure funds to replace a vehicle.

19. Health Department Agreement Addendum

This budget revision in the amount of \$98,277.00 allows the Health Department to use these funds for salaries and training and retention purposes. There is no local match for these funds.

20. SUP 2024-2 Findings of Fact

These findings of fact need to be approved for the Grace Chapel Cell Tower.

21. Application for National Police Association Grant

The Sheriff's Office is requesting approval to submit an application for the National Police Association Grant.

22. Application for NRA Foundation Teach Freedom Grant

The Sheriff's Office is requesting approval to submit an application for the NRA Foundation Teach Freedom Grant.

23. Application for Catawba Valley Community Foundation Grant

The Sheriff's Office is requesting approval to submit an application for the Catawba Valley Community Foundation Grant.

24. Application for Guardian Angel Safety Grant

The Sheriff's Office is requesting approval to submit an application for the Guardian Angel Safety Grant.

25. Application for Dickey Foundation Grant

The Sheriff's Office is requesting approval to submit an application for the Dickey Foundation Grant.

26. Interim Lease for Office Space with NCEM

This lease would allow NCEM to lease four offices with a conference room on the 3rd floor of the Health and Human Services Building.

27. Rail Road Assessment- Stone Consulting and WPCOG

This assessment will provide the value of the railroad and tell the County what needs to be repaired. The total cost for this is \$19,234 and will be shared among 3 counties and 6 municipalities. Caldwell County will be paying for this with sales tax reinvestment funds.

28. Approval of Minutes from August 12, 2024, Meeting

The approval of the August 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes is requested.

Vice Chairman LaBrose made the motion to accept the consent agenda as presented.
The motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

With there being no more business to attend to, Chairman Church made the motion to adjourn at 7:25 PM.
The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION

16-24



PATRIOT DAY COMMEMORATION SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, the United States of America fell victim to a terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 2,996 individuals, and

WHEREAS, as an initiative to remember the lives of those lost during this terrorist attack, Patriot Day was drafted by a joint resolution of the United States Congress on December 18, 2001; and

WHEREAS, Patriot Day honors those who perished as a result of an attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, and those who perished attempting to rescue individuals trapped under debris and on high floors of those buildings; and

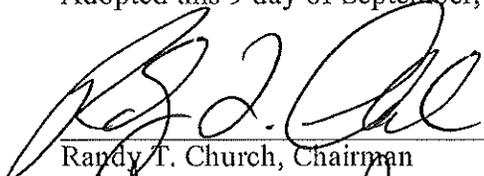
WHEREAS, Patriot Day also honors those who perished as a result of the attacks on the Pentagon in Virginia, and the lives that were lost on United Airlines Flight 93 in Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Caldwell County honors those who selflessly risked their lives to rescue others, and recognize those individuals as heroes; and

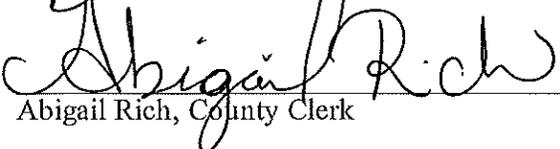
WHEREAS, each year on September 11, citizens across the United States of America are reminded how precious our freedom and safety truly are, and are encouraged to pay tribute to those whose lives were tragically lost that day; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of Caldwell County, commemorate Patriot Day on September 11, 2024, and express our deepest condolences for those lives lost in the 2001 terrorist attacks against our nation, as well as our highest gratitude for those who endeavor to preserve our liberties and our safety.

Adopted this 9 day of September, 2024.



Randy T. Church, Chairman



Abigail Rich, County Clerk

Caldwell County, North Carolina

Commendation

honoring

Master Officer Jonathan R. Kiger

WHEREAS, Caldwell County believes in the recognition of law enforcement officers for their heroic actions and outstanding efforts in service to the community. In keeping with this belief, Caldwell County is honoring NCWRC Master Officer Jonathan R. Kiger for his valor and lifesaving efforts; and

WHEREAS, On July 20, 2024, Master Officer Jonathan R. Kiger was patrolling the Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River Wilderness Area and responded to a child in the roadway saying his parents were in the water drowning; and

WHEREAS, Master Officer Jonathan R. Kiger ran down to the river and selflessly entered the water to pull the first victim to the shore where he began lifesaving efforts with the assistance of Lieutenant Isaac Hannah and Sergeant Dustin Ethridge; and

WHEREAS, Master Officer Jonathan R. Kiger upon being made aware of a second infant victim downstream, reentered the water with Sergeant Dustin Ethridge and together swam the infant to the shore where lifesaving efforts were started; and

WHEREAS, Master Officer Jonathan R. Kiger reentered the water a third time to rescue a man who was trapped in a recirculating current against a steep slippery rock face; and

WHEREAS, Master Officer Jonathan R. Kiger prevented the loss of an additional life during this tragic incident by swimming this person to the safety of the shore where they were both pulled from the river by Sergeant Dustin Ethridge.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Randy T. Church, Chairman of the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners, North Carolina, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners and the citizens of Caldwell County, do hereby commend NCWRC Master Officer Jonathan R. Kiger for his great courage and disregard for his own safety and present him with the law enforcement awards for Valor and Life Saving.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused this seal of the County of Caldwell to be affixed this twelfth day of August, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty-four.

Caldwell County, North Carolina

Commendation

honoring

Sergeant Dustin Ethridge

WHEREAS, Caldwell County believes in the recognition of law enforcement officers for their heroic actions and outstanding efforts in service to the community. In keeping with this belief, Caldwell County is honoring NCWRC Sergeant Dustin Ethridge for his valor and lifesaving efforts; and

WHEREAS, On July 20, 2024, Sergeant Dustin Ethridge was patrolling the Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River Wilderness Area and responded to a child in the roadway saying his parents were in the water drowning; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Dustin Ethridge ran down to the river to assist Master Officer Jonathan Kiger and Lieutenant Isaac Hannah. Upon arriving he found Master Officer Kiger performing CPR on a drowning victim that he had pulled from the water. Sergeant Ethridge ran back to the vehicles to gather throw bags and a life jacket that would later be instrumental in saving lives; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Dustin Ethridge upon his return to the river was being made aware of a second infant victim downstream, when he selflessly entered the water with Master Officer Jonathan Kiger, who together swam the infant to the shore where lifesaving efforts were started; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Dustin Ethridge was performing CPR when Master Officer Kiger reentered the water to rescue a man who was trapped in a recirculating current against a steep slippery rock face; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Dustin Ethridge prevented the loss of an additional life during this tragic incident by dragging both the victim and Master Officer Kiger to the safety of the shore with the life saving equipment he retrieved earlier in response to the drownings.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Randy T. Church, Chairman of the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners, North Carolina, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners and the citizens of Caldwell County, do hereby commend NCWRC Sergeant Dustin Ethridge for his great courage and disregard for his own safety and present him with the law enforcement awards for Valor and Life Saving.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused this seal of Caldwell County to be affixed this twelfth day of August, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty-four.

Caldwell County, North Carolina

Commendation

honoring

Lieutenant Isaac Hannah

WHEREAS, Caldwell County believes in the recognition of law enforcement officers for their heroic actions and outstanding efforts in service to the community. In keeping with this belief, Caldwell County is honoring NCWRC Lieutenant Isaac Hannah for his valor and lifesaving efforts; and

WHEREAS, On July 20, 2024, Lieutenant Isaac Hannah was patrolling the Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River Wilderness Area and responded to a child in the roadway saying his parents were in the water drowning; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Isaac Hannah ran down to the river to assist Master Officer Jonathan Kiger and Sergeant Dustin Ethridge. Upon arriving he found Master Officer Kiger performing CPR on a drowning victim that he had pulled from the water. Lieutenant Hannah yelled out to a man in the water asking if there was anyone else and this is when he was made aware of an infant victim downstream; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Isaac Hannah pointed out the location of the infant and threw his life saving equipment to Master Officer Jonathan Kiger and Sergeant Ethridge who swam into the river for the child, as he continued the lifesaving efforts on the first victim; and

WHEREAS, Lieutenant Isaac Hannah while performing CPR observed that the third person in the water was in distress and trapped in a recirculating current against a steep slippery rock face; and

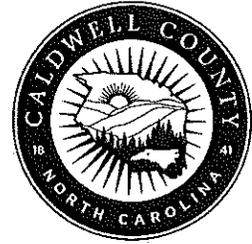
WHEREAS, Lieutenant Isaac Hannah prevented the loss of an additional life during this tragic incident by maintaining his situational awareness and redirecting the rescue efforts to pull the distressed man safely from the water.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Randy T. Church, Chairman of the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners, North Carolina, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners and the citizens of Caldwell County, do hereby commend NCWRC Lieutenant Isaac Hannah for his great courage and quick response in recognition to the severity of the situation and present him with the law enforcement awards for Valor and Life Saving.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused this seal of Caldwell County to be affixed this twelfth day of August, in the year of our Lord, two thousand and twenty-four.

RESOLUTION

17-2024



WHEREAS, On July 25th a citizen was walking on the sidewalk on Highland Avenue in Granite Falls near Brockford Inn when the citizen was a victim of an unprovoked attack by four pit bull dogs; and

WHEREAS, During the attack, all four dogs left their property and ran across the roadway to the sidewalk where the citizen was, surrounding the citizen; and

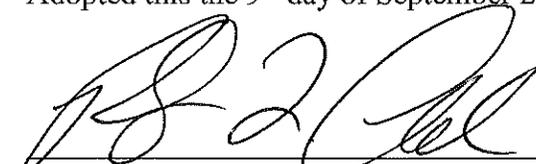
WHEREAS, Despite the citizen's efforts to try to run away, the dogs knocked him to the ground and started biting him. The citizen got back up and once again attempted to run away but was knocked down to the ground six more times all while the dogs continued biting him; and

WHEREAS, Tabitha Vinson and Samantha Dias-Hernandez had just got off work at Brockford Inn when they observed the attack occur and upon hearing the citizen yell for help, both individuals rushed to the citizen's side. Samantha and Tabitha kicked the dogs off the citizen and took him to a staircase at the side of the building. There, Tabitha called 911 to get the citizen help for his injuries; and

WHEREAS, Samantha and Tabitha demonstrated a selfless and courageous act of rendering aid in a sudden and unexpected situation which resulted in the preservation of a life; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Caldwell County Commissioners honor Tabitha Vinson and Samantha Dias-Hernandez for their selfless display of heroic and life-saving efforts.

Adopted this the 9th day of September 2024.



Randy Church, Chairman of the Board
Caldwell County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Abby Rich, MCCC
County Clerk