



Caldwell County  
North Carolina  
**Board of Commissioners Meeting**

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May 12, 2025 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  
Patrick Starnes, Commissioner  
Destin Hall, County Attorney  
Wayne Rash, Interim County Manager  
Abby Rich, County Clerk

### **Call to Order**

At 6:01 PM, Chairman, Randy Church, called the Board of Commissioners Meeting to order.

### **Public Comment Period**

Brenda Blankenship came to the podium. Ms. Blankenship expressed concern and opposition to the proposed amendments to the Racetrack Ordinance. Ms. Blankenship said this is a significant alteration to the fabric of the community with far-reaching negative consequences. Ms. Blankenship continued by stating a sound barrier was requested and asked if it was completed at this time. Ms. Blankenship asked the Board to consider the golf course that neighbors the track and noted there will not be a quiet off season if these amendments are enacted. Ms. Blankenship said Baton is a quiet community and many have chosen to live there because it is quiet. Ms. Blankenship said the roar of engines drowns out conversations and lowers property value. Ms. Blankenship told the Board the owners and manager of Tri-County Speedway do not live in the community. She also mentioned potential impacts to Baton Elementary School. Ms. Blankenship said the owners of Tri-County Speedway purchased the track knowing the restrictions in place.

Jackie McCool was next to come to the podium. Ms. McCool is concerned about the noise emitted from Tri-County Speedway. Ms. McCool said she is not asking the speedway to shut down, she is asking that there be sound barriers instead. Ms. McCool said the sound barriers are still not up and, instead, there are 4 advertising banners that would not qualify as a sound barrier. She heard the noise Saturday night and it was the same as before. Ms. McCool would like the extension not to be put into place until the sound barrier is up.

Lisa Wallace was next to come to the podium. Ms. Wallace said she is not a non-race fan and she likes racing. Ms. Wallace continued by saying it's not about wanting to close the racetrack. Instead, she wants the Board to compromise and not allow for this extension of the race season to take place. Ms. Wallace noted that the season had already previously been

extended. Ms. Wallace said the citizen in this area have had to compromise since the racetrack has been built. If this amendment goes through, the citizens would have to compromise once again.

Sherry Lovins was next to come to the podium. Ms. Lovins is concerned about what is being put in the landfill. Ms. Lovins noted there is heavy traffic and trash along the roads near the landfill. She continued by saying the transfer trucks hauling trash to the landfill often cross over the center line and numerous trucks are speeding. Ms. Lovins said they have called North Carolina Highway Patrol over this matter, but it has not been resolved. Ms. Lovins claimed the recent overflow of mulch from Hurricane Helene is large and it is considered hazardous waste. Ms. Lovins also mentioned the methane gas pipe that burns 24/7 and asked if that is good for the community. Ms. Lovins showed photos the trucks lined up outside of the Landfill, and other photos relating to her concerns about the landfill. Ms. Lovins ended her comments with concerns about fires at the landfill and whether or not these have to be reported.

Karen Hamby was the last to come to the podium. Ms. Hamby is concerned about the tractor trailers and the noise they make during the night when coming in and out of the landfill. Ms. Lovins said she wants something done about the trucks, and she is concerned about her safety with traveling.

### **Invocation**

Chairman Church resumed regular session at 6:20 PM.

Pastor Steve Williams of Sleepy Hallow Bible Baptist Church provided the invocation for those in attendance.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Commissioner Potter led the Pledge of Allegiance for those in attendance.

### **Agenda Amendments from the Board, Manager & Public**

Interim County Manager Wayne Rash informed the Board of two amendments to the agenda. The first was to strike Item 14. The second was to amend Item 20 to include GS 143-318.11 (a)(3) to consult with the County Attorney.

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

### **Agenda Items**

#### **1. Republic Services Information and Updates**

Jennie Holt, Mike Lloyd, and Cecil Cline with Republic Services came to the podium to speak about the debris from Hurricane Helene. Ms. Holt indicated there are currently 17 employees at the Foothills Regional Landfill. Ms. Holt told the Board the Landfill started taking storm debris January 6th and they are getting the debris from FEMA contractors. Ms. Holt said this Landfill does not take hazardous waste and the mulch being brought in is not considered hazardous. Ms. Holt told the Board the storm debris will start dwindling in July and there are multiple regional landfills receiving this debris. Ms. Holt said there is a lot of testing done to ensure the Landfill is operating correctly. Ground levels are tested, water is tested, and there are zero violations found. Ms. Holt also noted Republic Services also runs 9 convenience sites and these are free for

residents to dispose of their waste. Ms. Holt ended her comments by saying the Landfill recently had an inspection done by NCDEQ and it's the best it's looked in a long time.

Vice Chairman LaBrose asked about the trucks lining up along Cheraw Rd. outside of the Landfill and asked if there was a way to eliminate some of this traffic? Mr. Cline provided some mitigation strategies that he had implemented to minimize the traffic. Mr. Cline said there are about 285 trucks a day that come into the Landfill. A normal day without debris is about 50-75 Republic garbage trucks and 15-25 tractor trailers. Mr. Cline said a majority of the traffic coming in is local vendors. Vice Chairman LaBrose asked if there were other landfills in the area taking debris. Mr. Lloyd listed the others that are taking in debris. There was a discussion between the Board about when the Board approved the capacity increase and how long the increase was valid. The Board asked if Republic Services is taking in more than the daily allowance. Republic Services could not answer that question at the time. The Board's comments reflected they would like an immediate pause in bringing in storm debris from other counties.

Vice Chairman LaBrose made the motion for an immediate pause be made on bringing in debris until the Board finds out the numbers for amounts coming in. Attorney Hall asked if Vice Chairman Labrose was referring to Hurricane Helene related debris. Vice Chairman LaBrose said he is referring to the amount of tonnage over the amount and he was under the impression the agreement was not specific to Hurricane Helene debris. Republic Services indicated the State said the hurricane debris would not count against the tonnage amounts. The Board expressed concerned about the life of the landfill. Commissioner Potter asked why debris cannot go to another landfill.

Vice Chairman LaBrose again made the motion to pause the intake of the debris until the Board receives more information.

There was discussion about whether or not North Carolina was still under a State of Emergency due to Hurricane Helene.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **2. Foothills Medical Transport- IVC Patients**

Tommy Fite came to the podium to present about IVC transports done by Foothills Medical Transport. The Commissioners were in favor of this company potentially taking over the IVC transports, but they had not received the proper documents from the Sheriff's Office providing background information. Attorney Hall also referenced that he would like to review the contract prior to Board approval. The Board requested this be brought back to them at the June meeting.

## **3. Emergency Medical Services Week**

Emergency Services Chief Trevor Key came to read the resolution in honor of Emergency Medical Services Week 2025.

Commissioner Potter made the motion to approve the resolution.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **4. Older Americans Month 2025**

April Wiles-Williamson and Kim Arnett came to the podium.

DSS Director Kim Arnett read the proclamation for those in attendance.

Commissioner Branch made the motion to adopt the proclamation as read.  
Commissioner Potter thanked DSS for their work in hosting the Celebration of Life event.

Ms. Wiles- Williamson talked about how the various ways DSS works to honor older citizens in the community. Ms. Wiles-Williamson also told the Board about the upcoming Elder Abuse walk on June 21st and noted there were 268 people in attendance at the Celebration of Life.

The motion carried unanimously.

**5. Racetrack Ordinance Amendments- Second Reading**

Interim Manager Wayne Rash reviewed the proposed amendments to the Racetrack Ordinance.

Commissioner Starnes said the Board needed to pause this until the County has received more information about the sound barrier.

Commissioner Starnes made a motion to table this item.

Attorney Hall told the Board the motion should be to postpone this item to a future date.

Commissioner Starnes amended his motion to postpone this item to a different date.  
The motion carried unanimously.

**6. 2025/2026 Budget Recommendation**

Interim Manager Wayne Rash gave the 25/26 budget recommendation to the Board.  
Chairman Church discussed the proposed tax rate dropping to \$0.51.

There was discussion by the Board concerning making other budgetary cuts or possibly dropping the proposed tax rate further.

Commissioner Potter made comments concerning the potential of increasing employee salaries.

**7. Contract Extension with HDR**

Interim Manager Wayne Rash presented the contract extension with HDR. Manager Rash noted the general contractor is behind schedule.

Vice Chairman LaBrose made a motion to table this item.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Consent**

Chairman Church turned the meeting to Interim Manager Wayne Rash to present the Consent Agenda.

**8. Close Out Water Capital Projects**

The County recently completed three water projects. This budget revision closes out these three projects and moves the remaining funds of \$539,758.53 to the Water Booster Pumps Capital Project.

**9. Leased Assets**

GASB 87 requires governments to budget for leases as if they were purchases. This budget revision of \$828,541 fulfills this requirement. There is no cash flow that takes place with this revision.

**10. Attendance Updates to Minutes**

County Clerk, Abby Rich, requested to include the minutes to various meetings where they were not originally included. These requested revisions were as follows:

April:

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

July:

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

November:

Randy Church, Chairman  
Jeff Branch, Commissioner  
Donnie Potter, Commissioner  
Robbie Wilkie, Commissioner  
David Lackey, County Attorney  
Donald Duncan, County Manager  
Abby Rich, County Clerk

Absent: Mike LaBrose, Vice Chairman

December:

Randy Church, Chairman  
Mike LaBrose, Vice Chairman  
Jeff Branch, Commissioner  
Donnie Potter, Commissioner  
Patrick Starnes, Commissioner  
David Lackey, County Attorney  
Donald Duncan, County Manager  
Abby Rich, County Clerk

January:

Randy Church, Chairman  
Mike LaBrose, Vice Chairman  
Jeff Branch, Commissioner  
Donnie Potter, Commissioner  
Patrick Starnes, Commissioner

Destin Hall, County Attorney  
Donald Duncan, County Manager  
Abby Rich, County Clerk

February:

Randy Church, Chairman  
Mike LaBrose, Vice Chairman  
Jeff Branch, Commissioner  
Donnie Potter, Commissioner  
Patrick Starnes, Commissioner  
TJ Rohr, County Attorney  
Donald Duncan, County Manager  
Wayne Rash, Assistant County Manager  
Abby Rich, County Clerk

- 11. Appointment of Teasua Oxendine to Community Advisory Committee**  
Teasua Oxendine has requested appointment to the Community Advisory Committee.
- 12. Surplus of EMS Assets**  
EMS has requested the surplus of a 2015 Freightliner M2-106 Chassis and 2015 Freightliner Chassis & Exellance Module.
- 13. Approval to Advertise Part-Time Library Position**  
The Library has requested to advertise a part-time position vacancy.
- 14. Approval to Advertise Emergency Services Position**  
This item was removed from the agenda.
- 15. Acceptance of Grant Funding for County Veterans Office**  
The Veteran's Services Office is requesting to accept grant funding in the amount of \$18,288.97.
- 16. Trade-In of Sheriff's Office Vehicle**  
The Sheriff's Office has received a trade-in offer of \$3,000 for a 2003 Subaru Forester. This trade will replace a narcotics vehicle.
- 17. Approval to Advertise Tax Office Position**  
The Tax Office is requesting to advertise a position to fill a vacancy.
- 18. Appointment of Dr. Jason Chaffin to LEPC**  
Dr. Jason Chaffin requested appointment to the LEPC.
- 19. Revision of Appointment Term for Richard Harwood**  
The Community Advisory Committee asked to revise Richard Harwood's initial term to one year.

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

**Closed Session**

Chairman Church made the motion to enter into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(4) to discuss a matter related to economic development and G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(3) for attorney client privilege at 7:41 PM.

The motion carried unanimously.

**20. Economic Development Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(4)****Adjourn**

With there being no more business to attend to, Commissioner Starnes made the motion to adjourn at 9:11 PM.

The motion carried unanimously.



## PROCLAMATION

05-2025

### **OLDER AMERICANS MONTH MAY 2025**

**Whereas**, each May, our nation celebrates Older Americans Month to honor the countless contributions older adults have made and continue to make in our communities, workplaces, and families; and

**Whereas**, older Americans embody the strength, wisdom, and perseverance that form the foundation of our society, having lived through and contributed to decades of progress and change; and

**Whereas**, these individuals continue to enrich our communities through volunteering, mentorship, civic engagement, and leadership, sharing their talents and life experiences across generations; and

**Whereas**, older adults have demonstrated remarkable strength and resilience in overcoming challenges and adversity, adapting to change, and embracing new opportunities to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives; and

**Whereas**, ensuring that older adults have access to supportive services, healthcare, affordable housing, transportation, and opportunities for social engagement is essential to fostering a society where people of all ages can thrive; and

**Whereas**, Older Americans Month provides an opportunity for individuals of all generations to reflect on the importance of inclusion, respect, and intergenerational connection in strengthening the social fabric of our communities;

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved** that the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim May 2025 as **Older Americans Month in Caldwell County** and urges every resident to take time during this month to acknowledge older adults and the people who serve them as influential and vital parts of our community.

Adopted this the 12<sup>th</sup> day of May 2025.



Randy Church, Chairman  
Caldwell County Board of Commissioners



Abby Rich, County Clerk