POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Public Hearing & Regular Meeting
September 21, 2026 - 5:00 PM
Bryant H. Womack Justice & Administration Building
40 Courthouse Street Columbus, NC 28722
MINUTES

Present: Chairman Yoder, Commissioner Beiler, Commissioner Melton, and Commissioner Hargett. Also in attendance were County Manager Pittman, Attorney Berg, Clerk to the Board Freeman, and Citizens.

Absent: Vice-Chairman Moore

1. Public Hearing

A. Call to Order the Public Hearing. The purpose of the Public Hearing was to receive public comments on proposed new road names in Polk County: Columbus Township: Rising Sun Farm Trail – Private Road – Off of Golf Course Road – SR 1521, P & K Hillside Drive – Private Road – Off of Smith Waldrop Road – SR 1528, East Chins Way, West Chins Way, and Step of Heaven Road - All will be off of Jackson Hollow Lane - Private Road. Tryon Township: Susans Trail – Private Road – Off of US Highway 176. The notice was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin.

B. Citizen Comments

There were 4 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 - Commissioner Hargett

4. Pledge of Allegiance - Chairman Yoder

5. Approval of Agenda

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

Manager requested that a Hurricane Disaster Response and Recovery Grant Project Budget Amendment be added to the agenda as Item 8H.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of the August 17, 2026, Public Hearings and Regular Meeting Minutes.

B. Schedule a public hearing for proposed new road names to be considered on Monday, October 19, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in the R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice, Womack Building.

C. Schedule a public hearing for Monday, October 19, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in the Bryant H. Womack Justice & Administration Building to discuss funding and details for the Transportation Department for Fiscal Year 2028.

D. Tax Refund Requests in the amount of $842.46.

Commissioner Beiler moved to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Melton, 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 Berg.

Attorney Berg presented the proposed new road names following the public hearing. She stated that the proposed names had been properly advertised and met the requirements of the County's E911 Road Naming and Addressing Ordinance.

Commissioner Hargett moved to approve the road names, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Vaya Health Update - Angie Garner, Community Relations Regional Director.

Ms. Garner gave a presentation, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. She provided an overview of Vaya Health's upcoming merger with Partners, effective October 1, 2026, creating Vaya Partners, which will serve 47 counties.

C. North Carolina Department of Transportation - Troy Wilson, Division 14 District I Engineer.

I. Highway 176 Update

Mr. Wilson gave an update on Howard Gap Road. He explained that the project has been estimated at approximately $12 million. NCDOT has completed preliminary engineering and geotechnical work and is pursuing federal funding through the PROTECT Grant program.

Mr. Wilson also provided an update regarding US 176. The project has been awarded, and the contractor has begun mobilization. NCDOT is reviewing potential design changes that could provide time and cost savings. The roadway will eventually be gated and closed to through traffic during construction for the safety of workers and the traveling public. Construction is expected to take approximately two years.

I. SR-1547 Road Abandonment Resolution

Mr. Wilson explained the proposed abandonment of SR 1547, also known as Hicks McAbee. The road is a dead-end road serving three property owners. NCDOT had been considering improvements to the bridge and roadway that would require additional right-of-way. The property owner instead requested abandonment of the road.

Commissioner Beiler moved to approve the resolution requesting that NCDOT review and abandon SR 1547, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Resolution in Remembrance of September 11, 2001 - Commander Terry Trelford, Polk County Memorial Auxiliary to VFW Post #9116 read the resolution.

Commissioner Hargett moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

E. 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 resolution.

Commissioner Beiler moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Hargett and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Military Suicide Awareness Proclamation - Mike Collins, Polk County Memorial Auxiliary to VFW Post #9116 read the resolution.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously

G. Schedule a public hearing to review and discuss approval of text amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance on Monday, October 19, 2026, at 5:00 pm in the Bryant H. Womack Justice & Administration Building, 40 Courthouse St. Columbus, NC. (A copy of the current Subdivision Ordinance is available for review online at https://www.polknc.gov/ordinances.php or in the County Manager's office) - Cathy Ruth, Planning Director.

Ms. Ruth requested scheduling a public hearing to review and discuss proposed amendments to the County's Subdivision Ordinance.

Commissioner Beiler moved to schedule the public hearing for Monday, October 19, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at the Bryant H. Womack Justice and Administration Building, 40 Courthouse Street, Columbus, North Carolina, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

H. Hurricane Helene Disaster Response and Recovery Grant Project Budget Ordinance *(added during item 5.A.)*

Manager Pittman requested an amendment to the Hurricane Helene Disaster Response and Recovery Grant Project Budget Ordinance to increase the commercial dam project budget by $100,000. The additional funding will be used for a diving inspection of the backside of the dam. The estimated contract cost is estimated at $81,000–$82,000 and is eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

Commissioner Hargett moved to approve the budget ordinance, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items

There were 5 citizen comments.

10. Volunteer Board Applications

a. Adult Care Advisory Committee/Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee - There is one vacancy and one applicant; Michele Moore.

Commissioner Hargett moved to appoint the proposed applicant to the Adult Care Advisory Committee/Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

b. Fire Rescue Advisory Commission (FRAC) - There is one vacancy and one applicant; Josh Walton.

Commissioner Beiler moved to appoint the proposed applicant to the Fire Rescue Advisory Committee, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

c. Town of Tryon Planning Board (*Town seats are appointed by the Town Council; ETJ seats are appointed by the County Commissioners.*) — There are two vacancies and one applicant; Alan Casavant.

A motion to appoint the proposed applicant to the Town of Tryon Planning Board was requested; however, no motion was made.

11. Commissioner Comments

The Commissioners thanked everyone who attended the meeting.

12. Closed Session

a. Motion to go into Closed Session for the purpose of Attorney-Client Privilege.

Commissioner Melton moved to go into closed session for the purpose of Attorney Client Privilege, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

b. Motion to return to open session.

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

Commissioner Beiler moved to adopt the resolution authorizing the Sheriff of Polk County and County Attorney to confer with and utilize the services of the N.C. Alcohol Law Enforcement's Nuisance Abatement Team, to execute any required notices and to pursue actions pursuant to Chapter 19 of the North Carolina General Statutes for the abatement of public nuisances located at 113 Henry Ruff Road, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Adjournment

Commissioner Hargett moved to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Kennedy E Freeman
Clerk to the Board

Myron Yoder
Chairman