POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Public Hearings & Regular Meeting
February 16, 2026 - 5:00 PM
Bryant H. Womack Justice & Administration
Building 40 Courthouse Street Columbus, NC 28722
MINUTES

Present: Chairman Yoder, Vice-Chairman Moore, Commissioner Melton, and Commissioner Hargett. Also in attendance were Attorney Berg, Clerk to the Board Freeman, and citizens.
Absent: Commissioner Beiler, and Manager Pittman.

1. Public Hearing

   A. Call to Order the Public Hearing. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to receive public comments on proposed new road names in Polk County: Rutherfordton Township: Caeli Way – Private Road – Off of County Line Road South (SR 1155), Saluda Township: Sunny Meadows Lane - Private Road – Off of Fork Creek Road (SR 1100). The notice was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin.

   B. Citizen Comments

   There were no 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 - Chairman Yoder.

4. Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Melton

5. Approval of Agenda

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

   Vice-Chairman Moore requested the addition of an item to the regular agenda as Item A.1. to recognize Samuel Calton for his achievements.

   Commissioner Melton moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Consent Agenda

   A. Approval of January 12, 2026, Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes.

B. Budget Amendment to appropriate $22,000 of fund balance to the Finance Department.

Chairman Yoder requested brief discussion from Finance Director Sonya Ayers to clarify the purpose of the budget amendment.

C. Tax refunds in the amount of $728.74 through the period ending January 23, 2026.

D. Resolution Supporting the Development of the Saluda Grade Trail.

7. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items.

There was one citizen comment.

8. Regular Agenda Items

A. Consideration and approval of the proposed two new road names subsequent to the public hearing: Caeli Way, and Sunny Meadows Lane.

Commissioner Hargett moved to approve the proposed road names, Caeli Way, and Sunny Meadows Lane, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

A.I. Recognition of Samuel Calton for his Acceptance into the United States Military Academy at West Point. (Added during item 5.A.)

Vice-Chairman Moore recognized Samuel Calton for his acceptance into the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Mr. Calton is ranked fifth in his graduating class at Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy, serves as captain of the wrestling team, and has participated in several leadership and service programs. The Commissioners congratulated Mr. Calton on his achievements.

B. Polk County 2025 Audit Presentation - Brandi Fesperman, Martin-Starnes & Associates.

Ms. Fesperman gave a presentation, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes.

C. Discussion and Approval of the FY 2026/2027 Budget Calendar - Sonya Ayers, Finance Director.

Sonya Ayers, Finance Director, presented the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget Calendar. She explained that it complies with all North Carolina Local Government Commission requirements and follows the same timeline as the FY 2025/2026 calendar, which proved sufficient to allow departments adequate time for review and discussion throughout the budget process.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the 2026/2027 Budget Calendar, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

D. National Nutrition Month Proclamation - Gail Dyer, HHSA Senior Nutrition Coordinator; Natalie Trachsel, HHSA Assistant Director.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the National Nutrition Month Proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Polk County 2026 Senior Games - Julie Tremblay, Senior Center Activities Coordinator. (This item was requested by Commissioner Hargett).

Ms. Tremblay informed the Board that the Polk County Senior Games and SilverArts will take place from March through April. She encouraged eligible individuals to register to participate and invited those who do not wish to compete to consider volunteering during the events.

F. 2025 Sheriff's Department Annual Report - Sheriff Tim Wright.

Sheriff Wright gave a presentation, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes.

G. St. Luke's Hospital Community Facilities Grant Agreement - Attorney Berg.

Attorney Berg informed the Board of a Community Facilities Grant which was awarded to St. Luke's Hospital through the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the amount of approximately $2.8 million to support facility improvements. Attorney Berg said that, because the County owns the land on which the hospital is located, the County is required to sign the grant documents as a co-signer. She explained that the County has obtained a guaranty from St. Luke's legal counsel that would relieve the County of any financial liability if the hospital were to ever default on the terms of the grant.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the Facilities Grant Agreement and to grant Manager Pittman signatory authority, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items.

There was one citizen comment.

10. Volunteer Board Applications

A. Agricultural Advisory Board - There are three vacancies and one applicant; Sam Arledge.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to appoint Sam Arledge to the Agricultural Advisory Board, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) - There are two vacancies and two applicants; Monica Starr, and Kimberly McDonald.

Commissioner Hargett moved to appoint Monica Starr, and Kimberly McDonald to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Library Board of Trustees - There are four vacancies and two applicants; Linda Greensfelder, and Mary Ratcliffe,

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to appoint Linda Greensfelder and Mary Ratcliffe to the Library Board of Trustees, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

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, and Personnel.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to go into Closed Session for the purpose of Attorney-Client Privilege, and Personnel, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Motion to return to open session.

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

13. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Kennedy Freeman
Clerk to the Board

Myron Yoder
Chairman