Caldwell County
North Carolina
Board of Commissioners Meeting

September 22, 2025 at 6:00 PM
City-County Chambers
905 West Avenue NW, Lenoir

MINUTES

Attendance
Randy T. 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
Chairman Church called the September 22, 2025, Board of Commissioners Meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Public Comment Period
Amber Abel came to the podium to speak about the property located at 5623 Grace Chapel Rd. in Granite Falls. Ms. Abel would like the County Commissioners to consider adopting a tall grass ordinance and dilapidated property ordinance. Ms. Abel described the entities she spoke with concerning the property being a dumpsite of cars and furniture. She said after Hurricane Helene hit our area, she dropped the property for the time. Recently, she contacted the City of Hickory again and was told to contact the WPCOG. She feels the property is inviting unwanted pests and trespassers. Ms. Abel said she was grateful that the property had been mowed, but she would like to see further action taken.

Invocation
Chairman Church resumed regular Session at 6:06 PM.

Pastor Chris Kirby of Setzer's Creek Baptist Church came to the podium to provide the invocation for those in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance
Commissioner Donnie 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 the removal of Item 7 and the second was the addition of Item 27, a budget revision to spend grant funding awarded to the Sheriff's Office.

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

Agenda Items

1. 2015 Tax Release

Tax Administrator Josh Angle came to the podium to request the release of 10-year-old delinquent property taxes in the amount of $71,789.62. Commissioner Potter made the motion to approve the release of these taxes in the amount of $71,789.62.
The motion carried unanimously.

2. America 250

Public Information Officer Paige Counts came to the podium to present information about the America 250 initiative.

3. Loss of Records- Server Error

County Clerk Abby Rich read a statement into the official record regarding the loss of records due to a server error.

Per guidance from the North Carolina Department of Cultural and Natural Resources, I have been advised to read into the record the loss of public records due to server error. These records include all records kept in an online drive during Thomas Welch's tenure as clerk. Without knowing the entire contents of the folder, I am unsure of all the files lost. The most notable files that were compromised were the closed session minutes from June 3, 2019, to November 15, 2021. The old server that hosted these files was dying and started corrupting files. A switch was made to a new server, however, some file folders, such as those of the previous clerk, were corrupted before the switch could take place. IT worked for a week and a half to recover these files but were unsuccessful as even the back up files had been corrupted by the dying server. To mitigate any records loss such as this in the future, I save files in a desktop drive, in the one drive cloud, retain printed copies, and I am working to save all these files through SharePoint. There is no action to be taken on this matter, only the requirement of reading it into the official record.

4. Western North Carolina Joint Emergency Operations Center

Emergency Services Director Trevor Key came to the podium to present information about the new Emergency Operations Center. Chief Key noted the County had secured funding and was moving forward with a new-build facility. However, in Spring of 2025, the project halted when the County was $20,000,000 short. Emergency Services then started exploring partnerships and additional grant opportunities and have found two existing properties that would meet and exceed their needs. One of these is the Warehouse located on Norwood Street in Lenoir that was utilized for Hurricane Helene donations and storage. The second property is a non-disclosed property in the County. Both properties will need updates, but there is enough funding already allocated for the project that the County will not pay out for these renovations. Interim County Manager Wayne Rash provided that the undisclosed property is located at 240 Pleasant Hill Road in Hudson. The Board was able to negotiate a purchase price of $4,950,000, including the primary property and 6.5 acre tract adjoining. The current owners would like to lease the building back for 6 months as current employees transition. The cost of the warehouse is $2,400,000 and the current lease expired on August 31st, 2025. The next two months of lease payments will be credited to the purchase price of the

warehouse. Chief Key said the purchase price leaves the County with $13,000,000 for renovations. The new-build project was estimated at $41,000,000, but now this project will total $16,000,000-$17,000,000 with no County costs.

Vice Chairman LaBrose made the motion to move for approval of the agreement, subject to review, edits, and approval by the County Manager and County Attorney, and to grant County Manager authority to sign the final agreement in relation to both properties. The motion carried unanimously.

Emergency Services — Warehouse Lease Renewal

Consent

5. Animal Care and Enforcement- Requested Use of Donated Funds
The Animal Care Enforcement Office is requesting to use $4,300 in donated funds for its upcoming rabies vaccine clinic and to purchase new cat/dog traps.

6. CCSO- Undercover Vehicle Trade-In
Two undercover vehicles from the Sheriff's Office were compromised. The Sheriff's Office requested to trade these vehicles for a new vehicle and to use asset seizure funds to cover the remaining cost after the trade-in. The trade-in sum is $31,000 and the amount of asset seizure funds is $4,700.

7. Communications- Purchase of Recorder for Communications Center
This item was removed from the agenda.

8. Communications- Purchase of New Antenna for Communications Center
A budget transfer was requested to move funding to purchase a new antenna for the Communications Center after the previous one was damaged by a lightning strike. The amount of this transfer was $11,770.

9. DSS- Foster Children Placement Funds
DSS is requesting to spend additional State funding allocated for foster children placement in the amount of $13,235.

10. Health Department- Generator Purchase
The Health Department is requesting to move funds in its current budget for the purchase of a new generator for an EMS base. The amount of the requested transfer is $57,975.

11. Health Department-WIC Funding Flow Through
The requested revision in the amount of $5,361 is a flow through for the WIC program.

12. Facilities Services- Mowing Contract
This budget revision in the amount of $25,000 appropriates additional funding to cover keeping the current mowing vendor in place through September.

13. Market Adjustment for Level 3 Building Inspector
A market adjustment was requested for a level 3 building inspector.

14. **CCSO- Application Submission Request for NC Community Foundation Grant**
The Sheriff's Office requested to submit a grant application for the NC Community Foundation Grant.

15. **CCSO- Application Submission Request for CSX Grant**
The Sheriff's Office requested to submit a grant application for the CSX Grant.

16. **CCSO- Application Submission Request for Norfolk Southern Grant**
The Sheriff's Office requested to submit a grant application for the Norfolk Southern Grant.

17. **CCSO- Application Submission Request for kNot Today Grant**
The Sheriff's Office requested to submit a grant application for the kNot Today Grant.

18. **Economic Development - Building Reuse Grant Proposal for Project Clean Meds**
Economic Development requested the approval of a proposal for a $500,000 grant, with matching funds totaling $25,000 (five percent), to be allocated from the Sales Tax Reinvestment Fund. The proposal is for

19. **Ratify Proclamation for 250th Anniversary of Littlejohn United Methodist**
This item ratifies a proclamation passed honoring the 250th Anniversary of Littlejohn United Methodist Church.

20. **Water - Surplus of Vehicles**
The Water Department requested to surplus two vehicles that have passed the mileage threshold. These are: 2002 GMC C7500 VIN# 1GDM7J1C73F511102 and 1995 FORD LTL 9000 VIN # 1FDYA99L7SVA500025.

21. **Donation of Computers to the Public School System**
The IT Department has been buying back computers as they come off of lease because purchasing is cheaper than shipping the computers back. The school system has identified a need for computers and the IT Department is requesting to donate some of the surplus stock.

22. **Town of Sawmills Fireworks Application**
The Town of Sawmills requested the approval for a fireworks application.

23. **Opioid Settlement- Purdue & Sackler**
The approval of this resolution was requested to allow Caldwell County to join the Secondary Opioid Manufacturer Settlements as it relates to Purdue and the Sackler family.

24. **Reappointment of Granite Falls ETJ Planning Members**
Wylie Moore and Patrick Barker requested reappointment to the Granite Falls ETJ Planning Board.

25. **Appointment to the Regional Aging Advisory Committee**
Robert Hatley was appointed through sealed ballot.

26. **Approval of Minutes from August 11, 2025, Meeting**

The approval of the August 11, 2025, meeting minutes was requested.

27. Approval to Spend Grant Funding

The Sheriff's Office requested to spend funds awarded through a grant for an accreditation administrative position.

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

Closed Session-Pursuant to § 143-318.11.a(6) and § 143-318.11.a(3)

Randy made the motion to go into closed session pursuant to § 143-318.11.a (3) & (6) to consult with the County Attorney and discuss personnel matters.
The motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

Commissioner Potter made the motion to adjourn at 7:35 PM.
The monition carried unanimously.

PROCLAMATION

06-2025

CELEBRATING THE 250th ANNIVERSARY OF
LITTLEJOHN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, LENOIR, NC

WHEREAS, Littlejohn United Methodist Church, originally began between 1770 and 1775 as the Littlejohn Meeting House, a small one-room log house which was erected in the far east section of the cemetery, and

WHEREAS, earliest land grants of Rowan County, where this area of North Carolina was originally situated, was owned and gifted by Eli Littlejohn, whose brother, Rev. Abram Littlejohn was one of its earliest acting ministers, and

WHEREAS, early Methodist believers, along with those of the Baptist and Lutheran faiths, worshipped in the Littlejohn Meeting House, likely meeting on different days of the week and month, held one united theme or goal ~ that of spreading God's Word into the rural areas of Western North Carolina, and

WHEREAS, the Baptist and Lutheran believers separated from the Littlejohn Meeting House between 1778 and 1785 to establish their own meeting houses or churches, and

WHEREAS, Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury and countless dedicated circuit riders and ministers dedicated themselves to growing their congregation in the rural foothills of Burke County, which subsequently became Caldwell County, and

WHEREAS, Littlejohn United Methodist has maintained its mission to learn, experience, and be the love of Christ in this community and around the world, and

WHEREAS, Littlejohn United Methodist has continuously ministered unto the Lord and this community for these past 250 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners recognize August 24, 2025, as a day to celebrate 250 years of faith, unity, and God's blessing on Littlejohn United Methodist Church.

Adopted this the 22 day of September 2025.

Randy T. Church, Chairman

Attest: Abigail L. Rich

Abby Rich, NCCCC, County Clerk

RESOLUTION

21-2025

RESOLUTION BY THE CALDWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF OPIOID SETTLEMENTS WITH SECONDARY OPIOID MANUFACTURERS, PURDUE PHARMA LP, AND THE SACKLER FAMILY, AND APPROVING THE THIRD SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS BETWEEN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ON PROCEEDS RELATING TO THE SETTLEMENT OF OPIOID LITIGATION

WHEREAS more than 41,500 North Carolinians lost their lives to a drug overdose from 2000-2023.

WHEREAS the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated the total economic burden of prescription opioid misuse alone in the United States to be $78.5 billion a year, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement;

WHEREAS certain counties and municipalities in North Carolina joined with thousands of local governments across the country to file lawsuits against opioid companies, manufacturers, pharmaceutical distributors, and chain drug stores to hold those companies accountable for their misconduct;

WHEREAS settlements (collectively "the Secondary Opioid Manufacturer Settlements") have been reached in litigation against Alvogen, Inc., Amneal Pharmaceuticals LLC, Apotex Corp., Hikma Pharmaceuticals USA Inc. f/k/a West-Ward Pharmaceuticals Corp., Indivior Inc., Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Inc., Viatris Inc., and Zydus Pharmaceuticals (USA) Inc., as well as their subsidiaries, affiliates, officers, and directors (collectively "the Secondary Opioid Manufacturer Defendants") named in the Secondary Opioid Manufacturer Settlements;

WHEREAS representatives of local North Carolina governments, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, and the North Carolina Department of Justice have negotiated and prepared a Third Supplemental Agreement for Additional Funds ("SAAF-3") to provide for the equitable distribution of the proceeds of the Secondary Opioid Manufacturer

Settlements;

WHEREAS settlements have been reached, under Purdue Pharma L.P.'s bankruptcy plan, whereby Purdue Pharma L.P. ("Purdue") and members of the Sackler family will pay approximately $7.4 billion to settle opioid claims across the nation, which settlements would be subject in North Carolina to the equitable distribution of the proceeds as set forth in the Memorandum of Agreement ("MOA") which has already been approved by this Board.

WHEREAS by joining the Secondary Opioid Manufacturer Settlements, approving the SAAF-3, and approving the bankruptcy plan and settlements relating to Purdue and the Sackler family, the state and local governments maximize North Carolina's share of opioid settlement funds to ensure the needed resources reach communities, as quickly, effectively, and directly as possible;

WHEREAS it is advantageous to all North Carolinians for local governments, including Caldwell County and its residents, to sign onto the Secondary Opioid Manufacturer Settlements, SAAF-3, and approving the bankruptcy plan and settlements relating to Purdue and the Sackler family, in order to demonstrate solidarity in response to the opioid overdose crisis, and to maximize the share of opioid settlement funds received both in the State and Caldwell County to help abate the harm; and

WHEREAS both the MOA and SAAF-3 directs substantial resources over multiple years to local governments on the front lines of the opioid overdose epidemic while ensuring that these resources are used in an effective way to address the crisis;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the County Manager or County Attorney to execute, on behalf of Caldwell County, the necessary documents to enter into opioid settlement agreements, as set forth herein, with the Secondary Opioid Manufacturer Defendants, to execute the SAAF-3, and to approve the bankruptcy plan and settlement agreements relating to Purdue and the Sackler family, and to provide such documents to Rubris, the Implementation Administrator, subject to a pre-audit certificate thereon by the County Chief Financial Officer, if applicable, and approval as to form and legality by the County Attorney.

Adopted this 22 day of September, 2025.

Randy T. Church, Chairman
Caldwell County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Abby Rich, County Clerk