Caldwell County
North Carolina
Board of Commissioners Meeting

December 1, 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
Shane Fox, County Manager
Destin Hall, County Attorney
Iris Whitt, Interim County Clerk

Call to Order
Chairman Church called the December 1, 2025, Board of Commissioners meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Public Comment Period
There were no individuals who signed up for public comments.

Invocation
Pastor Nicky Waters from Poovey's Chapel Baptist Church led 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
County Manager Shane Fox stated one amendment to item 11 that would include the cancellation of the current contract, and he stated he would read the description within the motion itself. County Manager Shane Fox made an addition to the agenda, which would be item 14. This amendment is to the current audit contract due to the Federal Government shutdown. There was a delay with the Federal & State awards. So, we need to amend that contract.

Commissioner Mike LaBrose made a motion to accept the agenda as the County Manager presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Items

1. Swearing in Shane Fox as County Manager

Chairman Church stated the first item on the agenda is the swearing in of our new County Manager, Shane Fox. Mr. Fox was there with his family. Our Register of Deeds, the Honorable Wayne Rash, swore in Mr. Fox. The Board congratulated Mr. Fox.

Chairman Church thanked Wayne Rash for serving as Interim County Manager for the last 6 to 8 months and helping the county through this time.

2. Organizational Meeting

Chairman Church turned the meeting over to the County Manager, Shane Fox, for the yearly organizational meeting to choose a Chair and Vice-Chair. County Manager Shane Fox opened the floor for nominations for Chair of the County Commissioners. Commissioner Mike LaBrose made a motion to nominate Randy Church for Chair. The motion carried unanimously. County manager Shane Fox opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chair of the County Commissioners. Commissioner Randy Church made a motion to nominate Commissioner Mike LaBrose to be Vice-Chair. Commissioner Jeff Branch made a motion to nominate Patrick Starnes to be Vice-Chair. Commissioner Jeff Branch's motion failed due to a motion already on the floor. County Manager Shane Fox asked for a vote on the first motion for Commissioner Mike LaBrose for Vice-Chair. The vote was four in favor with one opposed. The motion carried.

3. Adoption of 2026 Meeting Calendar

Chairman Church stated he would entertain a motion to accept the 2026 Board of Commissioners Meeting calendar as proposed to the Board. Commissioner Potter made a motion to adopt the calendar as proposed. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Authorization to Apply for USDA REDLG Loan

Jesse Trivette, the Economic Coordinator of Economic Development Commission, requested authorization to apply for the USDA REDLG Loan. Mr. Trivette explained that the REDLG Loan Program provides 0% interest financing to eligible rural utility organizations which then pass those funds to local projects that will create or retain jobs within our rural communities. The REDLG Loan is up to $1 million dollars with 0% interest for up to a 10-year term. This loan requires a 20% match, which would be satisfied with funds appropriated for Evergreene development through the ARC and GoldenLeaf grants. There would be no county money spent on the 20% match portion. The monies have already been appropriated through other grants. The second part is the REDLG Grant. Mr. Trivette explained this is not really a grant but an additional loan. This would be an additional $300,000 with 0% interest for up to a 10-year term. It would require a 20% match by Blue Ridge Energy. Blue Ridge Energy is throwing in another $60,000 to that. So, the total loan we will be asking for is $1,360,000. Both the REDLG Loan and REDLG Grant are pass-through loans. Blue Ridge will pass through to us. The deadline for the Grant Application is December 31, 2025. Mr. Trivette stated they should get some information back from the grant within the next three to six months. If awarded the loan, the borrower must adhere to the Build America by America Act. That means all the products that we use in our building will need to be

made in the United States. Commissioner Branch asked Mr. Trivette what the loan would be used for. Mr. Trivette stated the loan would be used for the construction of a 50,000 sq. ft. shell building at Evergreene that Caldwell County will own and operate. Commissioner Branch made a motion to apply for the USDA REDLG loan. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent

5. Acknowledgment of Reviewal of Bonds

This is for approval and acknowledgment of the review of our surety bonds. This is for the Sheriff, Register of Deeds, Tax Administrator, Finance Director and County Manager.

6. NC Community Foundation Grant Application

The Sheriff's Office is requesting to apply for the NC Community Grant Application. The grant application is for two enclosed trailers and equipment related to search and rescue and natural disaster response for the Sheriff's Office.

7. Acceptance of the North Carolina Railroad Micro-Grant

The acceptance of the North Carolina Railroad Micro-Grant. The North Carolina Railroad will give $50,000.00 to pay for the preliminary engineering report to run sewer from Lenoir to the airport.

8. Health Department Small Debt Write-Off

The Health Department is requesting approval of the Small Debt Write-Off. To update account receivables at the Caldwell County Board of Health meeting, the Board approved the submission of 124 accounts totaling $5,186.45 to the Board of Commissioners for write-off. This is an annual write-off process that we do to clean the books up.

9. Budget Revision - Health

This is an addition of funds through a grant. The grant was received through the Community Care Physicians Network. It's for meeting quality benchmarks and reducing cost in the Medicaid program. This is an additional $41,487.37 coming to the county.

10. DEQ Grant

Maintenance is requesting approval to apply for the DEQ Grant. This would be $3 million. This would be for capital upgrades. This would be money for the county. That process or the approval would begin in 2026.

11. Approval of contractual services with GovTax for Personal Property Auditing

The Tax Department is requesting approval of contractual services with GovTax for Personal Property Auditing. This is not asking for additional money. This is just approving the contract that was included in the 2026 budget process. The one amendment that was added, through the suggestions of our attorneys, is for the Board to cancel the agreement with Evans and Associates Consulting Group. That agreement was dated July 1, 2022, and the county would provide staff with 30 days of written notice to Evans and Associates Consulting Group for the cancellation.

12. Reduction of Interim Manager's salary to return to budgeted ROD salary.

This would be the reduction of the Interim Manager's salary to return to the budgeted Register of Deeds salary.

13. Approval of Minutes from November 3, 2025, Board of Commissioners Meeting

The approval of November 3, 2025, meeting minutes were requested.

14. Amendment to the Audit Contract

Due to the Federal Government Shutdown, the audit schedule of Federal and State awards which is prepared by the Federal Government through mostly DSS and Health grants have been delayed. The overall financial audit is complete. However, the section in the back, which is that schedule for the state awards has not been completed by the audit firm. They expect to have that done this month.

Commissioner LaBrose made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Closed Session Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(4)

Chairman Church made the motion to enter closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.44(a)(4) to discuss a matter related to economic development at 6:24 PM. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Branch made a motion to come out of closed session. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

With there being no more business to attend to, Commissioner Branch made a motion to adjourn at 7:21 PM. The motion carried unanimously.