# Caldwell County
# North Carolina
# Board of Commissioners Meeting

August 24, 2026, at 6:00 PM
City-County Chambers
905 West Avenue NW, Lenoir

## AGENDA

**Call to Order**
Chairman Randy T. Church called the August 24, 2026, Board of Commissioners Meeting to order at 6:01 PM and welcomed those in attendance.

**Public Comment Period**

Charles Senf came to the podium to speak. Mr. Senf spoke about the public comment period. He stated that he felt it was apart from the regular meeting so it might be easily excluded from the live streaming and television broadcasts of the regular meeting. He then stated he felt the minutes did not accurately convey the words and sentiments spoken at the July 27th meeting. In closing he read a quote that was stated at the July 27th meeting by a Board member.

Roger Patterson came to the podium to speak. Mr. Patterson spoke about the public comment procedure. He mentioned the previous meeting which had a public hearing. He then recommended that it be considered to hear public comments the week or month prior to take into consideration the public comments. He added that he would like there to be time for the board to answer questions for public comment. The clerk then stated the policy for public comment which is a comment format not for questions and answers as signed and agreed to on the public comment sign up sheet.

Wade Nichols came to the podium next to speak. Mr. Nichols spoke about his No Bad Days River Safety Day. He said that he has been doing his cookout for three years and it continues to grow. He mentioned that he reached out on July 3rd to acquire a permit and is still waiting to hear back from them about permit.

**Invocation**
Pastor Eric A. Thomas led the invocation for those in attendance and watching from home.

**Color Guard**
Boy Scout Troop 263 from Granite Falls presented the colors.

**Pledge of Allegiance**
Boy Scout Troop 263 led the Pledge of Allegiance for those in attendance and watching from home.

## Agenda Amendments from the Board, Manager & Public

County Manager Shane Fox said there was one addition to the agenda. Fox stated that this would be item 29 on the consent agenda. He added that this was a budget revision for 911 consoles paid for with 911 monies for the new facility located at Pleasant Hill Rd.

Vice Chairman LaBrose made a motion to approve the agenda as the County manager presented. The motion carried unanimously.

## Agenda Items

### 1. South Caldwell Lady Spartans Softball 2026 6-A State Champions

Chairman Church then welcomed the team that was in attendance and read a list regarding the teams' accomplishments, including the weighted GPA of the team at the end of the season of 4.295, additionally they outscored their opponents 343-104 throughout the season. The Lady Spartans also tied their own NC High School Association home run record with 59 home runs. The team finished the season with an overall record of 27 and 4. Chairman Church then read Resolution15-2026 honoring the team.

Chairman Church made a motion to adopt the resolution.
The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Branch said that the Board was proud of the team.
Vice Chairman LaBrose congratulated the team for their accomplishments.
Commissioner Starnes said that the team could do anything in life that they want to do, just set your mind to it.

The Board then presented a framed certificate of the adopted resolution and challenge coins to each team member in attendance.

### 2. Rezoning -2565 Connelly Springs Rd.

Kim McGee came to the podium to present a rezoning request for Granite Trailer Sales located at 2565 Connelly Springs Rd. Ms. McGee stated that a few years ago they rezoned a portion of the tract to general business and now they are requesting to rezone the remaining acreage. She said the property is located at the Intersection of Connelly Springs Road and Baton School Rd and is outside the flood hazard area, vacant and partially wooded. McGee added that it is in the protected area of the watershed and requires only a maximum of 36% impervious area. She shared a map of the area and displayed a picture to those in attendance and watching from home. She stated the planning board considered all the relevant land development ordinances, the comprehensive plan and is recommending approval of this rezoning request. The Planning Board believes this request is reasonable and in the public's interest because the amendment is consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan that suggests general business zoning for this area and there is no negative impact believed for the surrounding area.

Chairman Church asked Ms. McGee if the Planning Board approved this request. Ms. McGee replied, yes, they did.

Chairman Church Declared the Public Hearing Open.
There was no one signed up to speak. Church then gave final opportunity for anyone who wished to speak.
With no one wanting to speak Chairman Church declared the public hearing closed.

Commissioner Starnes made a motion to approve the rezoning request for 2565 Connelly Springs Rd. from RA-20 to GB by acknowledgement of the Planning Director's comments from the Planning Board and concur with the findings as to reasonableness and compliance with the comprehensive plan.
The motion carried unanimously.

3. **Rezoning -4322 Celia Creek Rd.**

Chairman Church declared the public hearing open.

Kim McGee then presented another rezoning request from David Drum located at 4322 Celia Creek Rd from RA-20 to multi-family. McGee said this request is proposing to rezone 3.5 acres of an 8-acre tract, with a multi-family district to construct 16 total units or 2 two story complexes for multi-family housing. Ms. Mcgee stated that the property is outside the flood hazard area and the proposed area is vacant and partially wooded and is in the protected area of the watershed, so the maximum impervious area allowed is 36%. She added that there is County water however, it may be difficult to get that to the requested side of property without boring under the road. She then presented a vicinity map, a map indicating the proposed re-zoning area, and a photo of the intersection for those in attendance and watching from home. McGee stated that the Planning Board and staff reviewed the request against all land development ordinances. The first is a comprehensive plan that recommends multi-family in areas near commercial corridors and within close proximity to resources and goods. The Comprehensive Plan also states that public water and suitable soil for multi-family size septic systems need to be available. A minimum of 8 acres is suggested in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. McGee then stated in the Zoning ordinance that when a board considers the use, they must look at all the uses allowed, however, with multi-family the only use allowed is multi-family apartment buildings. The board also considered the development standards of 10,000 square feet for the first unit and an additional 3,000 square feet for each additional unit as well as consideration of setbacks to comply with. McGee said there is 20% open space required and 2 parking spaces per unit with multi-family. She said the board also considered the watershed ordinance which requires 36% maximum built upon area. McGee stated that the Planning Board considered this request and is recommending denial since the property is already partially developed, adding the usable area for the buildings, parking, septic repair area, setbacks, and open space will make it difficult to meet the zoning requirements. She stated that based on evidence presented to the board,

the rezoning would negatively impact the single family residential and agricultural nature of the area.

Chairman Church then stated there were several individuals signed up to speak.

Myron West came to the podium and thanked the board for the opportunity to address this issue. Mr. West stated that he lives adjacent to the property and has for 42 years. He stated that this is an agricultural, single-family area far from commercial corridors and is not within the city limits of Gamewell. He added there is no scheduled trash pickup in this area. He said he believes this is an inappropriate place for multi-family. Mr. West added that he does not have anything against multi-family nor the requestor.

Judy Vackers came to the podium to speak. Ms. Vackers stated that the Hartland Road area is a beautiful agricultural area and they moved there for the peacefulness and quiet surroundings. She added that it is not without downfalls, and the property adjacent to them has a business and that creates a lot of traffic. Ms. Vackers then said that Hartland Road is a narrow road where people speed up and down too fast and there are tractor trailers traveling to service businesses. She said she felt adding these apartments would compound the traffic and create safety issues if kids were playing in this area. She said this zoning change does not make sense and with the board as the gatekeepers of the county, please consider a commonsense decision on the rezoning of this property, your constituents do not want this.

Chairman Church then gave anyone else an opportunity to speak for or against this rezoning request.
Doris Knight then spoke from the audience. She stated that she lives close to the property in question and the lady seated next to her lives beside her. Ms. Knight said they like the community, it is peaceful and quiet, and she believes it would tear the community up. She added that she has a friend that lives in a multi-unit complex in another county and it is very loud and this would ruin the community. Ms. Knight stated that she is the third generation to live in that area, and she does not see any positive about this request.

Chairman Church asked Ms. McGee for the Planning Boards decision. Ms. McGee said their decision was to deny it based on inconsistency with the comprehensive plan. Ms. McGee also stated that she has received multiple phone calls and everyone was opposed.

Commissioner Branch recused himself from the vote due to a personal relationship with the applicant, he stated he felt that it would not be fair and right for him to vote.

Chairman Church then declared the public hearing closed.
Commissioner Starnes made a motion to agree with the planning board to deny the request as stated by the planning board based on inconsistency with the comprehensive plan and not to be a reasonable use of the property.
The motion carried unanimously.

## 4. Turning the Page at the Caldwell County Public

Janet Fore Library Director came to the podium to present updates regarding the Caldwell County Public Library. Ms. Fore asked all audience members to stand who were in attendance on behalf of the Board of Trustees, library employees, and friends of the library, many attendees stood. Ms. Fore stated that she started at the library almost 10 years ago and at that time the administration had two goals, one was to reach 300,000 checkouts and the other was to increase the number of programs offered. She said the library was about to reach 300,000 checkouts before Covid. She added that they rebounded and hit 300,000 in 2023 and then in 2025 they were up to 349,000. She said they have 400,000 in their sights and will hit that very quickly. She added that those numbers are a testament to the librarians who thoughtfully purchase books, tech services who process them, staff who promote them, and circulation staff who check out the books to patrons. Ms. Fore then recognized that teen checkouts are going down nationwide, however, teens in Caldwell County are showing double digit growth for four years in a row. She mentioned the other goal, Programming, stating that in the summer of 2018 they were so proud to offer teens one program a week, a total of 8 programs that summer. Fore said that this summer between the three branches, the teens had 42 programs they could attend, an increase of 425% in 8 years. She also mentioned children and adult programs also saw significant increases as well. Ms. Fore stated there are great programs offered. Adding that they have a partnership with NC Works and one of their staff members comes to the library every Wednesday afternoon to help patrons with job applications and resumes, and they partner with them to offer a job fair every month. Lenoir is also partners with the COG for digital drop-ins, two of their staff come once a month for four hours. Patrons can schedule an appointment to get help with their devices or a website they want to use. Ms. Fore said that Opportunity for All is their best attended program. This program is for adults with disabilities, mental or physical and their caregivers. She said when she first came to the library, this population would just sit there and not speak or engage, and now through this program they speak to everyone. They meet once a week and do science, art, story time, life skills, and their favorite is the dance party. She said they have 40-50 people attending the dance party on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 10:00. She stated the most popular teen program is Dungeons and Dragons, and the group has grown so large they are split into 2 groups now. Ms. Fore said the younger kids have story time, music and movement, STEM, and art. She said her favorite program for younger kids is Read with Abbey. She stated that Abbey is a trained therapy dog and the kids can sit with her and read a book because Abbey doesn't judge you if you read slowly or mispronounce a word. Fore stated that this summer they had a record 1,191 kids registered for summer reading, and they read 651,195 minutes collectively. She said kids are reading in this county. She stated numbers were up in all areas this summer, circulation, door counts, issuing new cards, number of programs, and programming attendance. Ms. Fore said that the library is not always fun and games, and they see people on some of the worst days of their lives. She said they help domestic violence victims find resources, they assist individuals who are in danger of their power being turned off and seeking help from a local agency and must have a paper copy of their power bill. She added that staff is able to be kind and patient and help them get the piece of paper they need. Ms. Fore stated the library also

works with the COG and the Caldwell Together Group to be a warming and cooling station when needed. She said not as dire but still important, the Hudson Library helps a lot of desperate teenagers needing a paper copy for their driver's license. Fore mentioned that the Lenoir Library recently had the most expensive team building activity in county history, when a seam split on the roof and started raining inside the library. She said she was so proud of staff pulling together and in two hours moving 15,000 books saving the collection and the local history room. She also mentioned the County Maintenance staff quickly shifted in gear to stop the water from pouring in. Ms. Fore said they have been located on Hospital Avenue since 1986. She added the building itself is a couple decades older than that and is in need of some updates. Ms. Fore said the paver bricks of the retaining wall are cracked and crumbling and need to be replaced for safety. She said there are terrible stains inside on the carpet due to the roof leak and the library has only been repainted once in 40 years and the bathrooms are original from 60 years ago. Ms. Fore then spoke about the Hudson Library and said staff go in every day wondering if this is the day the ceiling is going to fall in. She stated she immediately reached out to Isaac Bush in maintenance and Chip Hughes the Safety Officer, and their consensus was the building needed a lot of work, but no one was in immediate danger. She said this branch has a very dedicated elderly population and over the last two years, checkouts for children have increased by 28% and teen checkouts are up by 12%. Ms. Fore then asked, what do we do next? She said there was a need to start reaching out to outlying areas and possibly have a bookmobile and this was something she was looking into too.

Commissioner Branch said that he remembered when the internet came, and he thought libraries would be out of business. But he sees the library keeps growing and he thanked the staff for what they do, and said the library has a lot more to offer than the internet.

Vice Chairman LaBrose said the information she shared was wonderful. He added the library has a lot to offer and offers internet to those who do not have that access. He then encouraged Ms. Fore to continue talking with the County Manager and as budget time rolls around let's talk about some of those needs.

Chairman Church mentioned the programs offered and said he had two grandchildren that look forward to the Touch the Truck program annually and he appreciates the many programs they do. He added that he was recently appointed to the Library Board and there are challenges with the buildings, and we may have the opportunity to make some repairs, carpet replacement and paint. He stated that the Hudson branch is going to need some attention. Church said he wasn't sure what it would take to facilitate some of the needs.

Ms. Fore said after looking at some of the numbers Phase 1 repairing the front of the building and safety issue would cost approximately $130,000, Phase 2 to replace carpet and paint $200,000 that does not include the bathrooms.

Chairman Church then asked the County Manager if there was leftover SCIF funds in the current budget. Manager Fox replied, yes sir, that is correct. Fox

stated that there is that amount remaining in those funds and at the Board's discretion we could potentially move forward with the first two phases.

Chairman Church made a motion to use SCIF money to make repairs at the library as requested for $330,000.
The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Starnes thanked Ms. Fore and her staff, and he appreciates everything they do. They are a team.

## 5. International Overdose Awareness Day

Chairman Church then read Proclamation 09-2026, proclaiming August 31st, 2026, International Overdose Awareness Day in Caldwell County.

Vice Chairman LaBrose made a motion to adopt the Proclamation.
The motion carried unanimously.

Jaclyn Tester and Lauren Tolbert, PORT peer support specialists, came to the podium. Ms. Tester said she would not be here today without program support, and she thanked the board for what they had done for this program.

## 6. VAYA Health Updates

Dustin Burleson, Community Relations Regional Director at VAYA, came to the podium to present a VAYA Health update. Mr. Burleson stated he would be formally speaking about the merger that VAYA Health is having with Partners Managed Care. He said the new brand will be VAYA PARTNERS, with a vision for a stronger organization that is better together. He stated this merger came as they were thinking about how to become a stronger organization, promote sustainability and preserve the public system. He then presented a brief PowerPoint presentation. He mentioned a quote made by Secretary Sangvai that spoke about the plan to reduce the number of health plans as there are 9-12 Medicaid plans in North Carolina currently. Burleson then said that this is not a takeover but a true merger, voluntary, collaborative, proactive with equal governance and shared leadership. He then said the impact to Caldwell County will be minimal with no noticeable changes. He added that most staff will stay in the community with the people who live here working in these counties. He said there will be a change in the governing board structure with 13 representatives from each area, consisting of 8 legacy board members, selected by the current governing board, 2 Consumer and Family Advisory Committee (CFAC) members, 3 reps appointed by each County Commissioner Advisory Board (CCAB), noting that VAYA currently has four regional boards collectively that make up the current CCAB, and the VAYA board chair and Partners board chair will serve as co-chairs until a vote by the new consolidated board in January 2027. Burleson stated the new board will hold its first meeting in October and all meetings are subject to open meetings laws. He stated that each county will be

asked to appoint one representative to the merged CCAB, who must be an elected county commissioner, former county commissioner, county manager, DSS/HHS director, public health director, or other individual appointed by the county. He said the county would have an email or letter coming from the VAYA board clerk and CEO to formally appoint a member.
Chairman Church asked if there were any updates on a potential care facility on Wilkesboro Blvd. Mr. Burleson said that the behavioral urgent care just opened a little over a year ago where people can walk in and get a 23-hour assessment and see what they need for continued care. Burleson said the renovation of the Lenoir office on Wilkesboro Blvd will be a substance abuse facility with more outpatient at first, but VAYA is also on the process of looking at two properties to bring in two residential substance abuse treatment facilities for male and female adults. He added that there are a lot of hoops legally for the steering committee, including a merger that is causing some delay.
Chairman Church said this has been a priority for our community for a long time.

## 7. 8/24/2026- Tax Collectors Settlement

Josh Angle Tax Administrator came to the podium to present the Tax Collectors Settlement for 8/24/2026. Chairman Church said that this would be Mr. Angle's last meeting as Tax Administrator as he has taken another position, he thanked him for his work, revaluations, appraisals, values and the overall job he has done. Church added that he had heard from some of the Board of Equalization and Review members and they are not happy that he is leaving.
Commissioner Starnes also thanked Mr. Angle. Mr. Angle expressed his appreciation.
Mr. Angle then presented the Tax Collectors Settlement in accordance with N.C.G.S. 105-373(d) he reported the final settlement to be delivered into the hands of the successor. He stated the amount collected from July 1, 2026, through August 24, 2026, is as follows, current year collections total $37,549,153.95, he then pointed out that is 72.17% of the original July levy received. He then stated delinquent collections for 2015-2025 total $363,962.20 with the sum of these numbers equaling $37,913,116.15. Mr. Angle then said the remaining balance of the current year's levy equals $14,546,161.74 or 27.83%. He then requested this settlement to be accepted this evening.

Commissioner Branch made a motion to accept the tax collector's settlement as presented.
The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Angle then thanked the board for the opportunity to be in the appointed position and for putting faith in him. He then wished the board and the new county manager the best. He then thanked his staff in the department of 21 people, two offices including the Granite Falls collections center, and said they do an excellent job. He added that customer service with this team is the best across the state.

Commissioner Branch then made a statement acknowledging the loss of Monty Woods who recently passed away. He was a former County Tax Administrator.

## 8. Appointment and Oath of Office for Interim Tax Administrator

County Manager, Shane Fox, came to the podium to address appointing an interim tax administrator after the resignation of Mr. Angle. Fox stated that N.C.G.S. 105-294 that is labeled County Assessor, states whenever a vacancy occurs in this office, the board of county commissioners shall appoint a qualified person to serve as county assessor for the period of the unexpired term. Fox then said the recommendation of staff is presenting an Interim position to Jason Pennell, who is the current real property appraisal supervisor for the board's consideration. He added that Mr. Pennell was in attendance as well.

Vice Chairman LaBrose made a motion to appoint Jason Pennell to the position of Interim Tax Administrator and to approve the required bond on the effective date on August 25, 2026, at 8:00 AM.
The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Church then recognized County Clerk, Tasha Brown who came to the podium. Ms. Brown then administered the oath of office to Mr. Jason Pennell.

## 9. 2026 Charge to the Interim Tax Administrator

Jason Pennell, Interim Tax Administrator, then came to the podium to present the 2026 Charge to the Interim Tax Administrator. Mr. Pennell stated that in accordance with N.C.G.S. 105-321 and N.C.G.S. 105-352, he requested the authorization to collect the remaining 2026 taxes.

Commissioner Starnes made a motion to accept the Interim Tax Administrators request to collect the remaining 2026 taxes.
The motion carried unanimously.

## 10. DSS Monthly Updates

DSS Director, Kim Arnett, came to the podium to present an update for DSS. Ms. Arnett thanked the board for allowing her to provide an update. Ms. Arnett stated that they typically highlight different program areas in different months and this month is Economic Services and Child Support Appreciation month. Ms. Arnett then introduced Economic Services Supervisor Megan Wisewman, who came to the podium. Ms. Wiseman said that she wanted to show appreciation for the staff that do this work every day. Ms. Wiseman said that behind every case number is a name, a family, a crisis that couldn't wait. She added that staff don't get the luxury of one problem at a time and they multi-task, interact with different citizens, and hold tension every day. A brief video was then presented to those in attendance and watching from home. The video was a depiction of the things staff do daily. Ms. Arnett then reiterated the importance of the economic services program. She added that the economic division is an important tool and fraud investigation is a critical part of that. Ms. Arnett stated that Child Support work is

also essential and their role extends far beyond collections. She then said as we are entering the beginning of the school year, we anticipate a seasonal increase in the child protective services area that is typical once school starts. Arnett said the Child Welfare program is moving into a new statewide software program, and they are already in the program for intake and investigations in child welfare and they will be moving into the program for case management and foster care as well at the beginning of September.
Ms. Arnett then said that there are 161 children experiencing foster care and 45 adults under guardianship in the county. She stated they continue to struggle with placement for children and adults, having to place children and adults in counties and states apart from us, and this is a statewide issue. Lastly Ms. Arnett mentioned the ongoing collaboration with the County Manager as he has been learning more about their programs, processes, and operational needs. She said as part of those discussions they have explored the possibility of outsourcing certain functions. Adding that Mr. Fox did recently request that they extend an existing contract for food and nutrition services, she stated that staff feel this has been productive for them.

Commissioner Starnes said that he thinks staff are doing a great job.
Chairman Church thanked Ms. Arnett for the update.

**11. Health Monthly Updates**

Anna Cook, Health Director, came to the podium to present the monthly public health update. Ms. Cook stated that two case management programs are possibly ending in the women's health division this December. She added that is a state mandated program, however, they are being taken by our PHPs or Primary Healthcare Providers. Ms. Cook said that Dr. Picton, the medical director, is retiring in February, and they are working on finding a contractual medical director and that seems very positive currently. She said that the department is busy with back-to-school physicals and immunizations as certain immunizations are required by the schools. Ms. Cook said they are planning a cancer screening event in November, and they are partnering with the UNC Cancer Institute and there will be more details coming. She stated there were two cases of Cyclosporiasis in Caldwell County unrelated to outbreak and related to travel. Lastly, she mentioned the department's accreditation is approaching with documentation due in December and a spring site visit.

Commissioner Branch and Commissioner Starnes thanked Anna for her updates.

**Consent**
Chairman Church turned the meeting over to County Manager Shane Fox, to present the consent agenda.

**12. Budget Revision - Purchase Order Rollover**
This budget revision is to rollover $225,000 in purchase orders that were approved in the prior fiscal year, rolling those funds into the new fiscal year.

13. **Budget Revision - Health Department Grant for Helene Recovery**
This budget revision allocates $784,094 in grant funds received for Helene recovery, awarded to the Health Department with no local match required.

14. **Budget Revision - Health Grant for Public Health Services**
This budget revision allocates $26,401 in grant funds received for public health services, awarded to the Health Department with no local match required.

15. **Budget Revision - Health Retention Grant**
This budget revision allocates $109,385 in grant funds received for retention and training, awarded to the Health Department with no local match required.

16. **Budget Revision - Building Inspections Software License**
This budget revision allows for $14,023 to purchase additional software needed for Building Inspections.

17. **Budget Revision - 911 Fund Equipment**
This budget revision allows $7,982.50 of 911 funds to purchase computer equipment for the Communications Center.

18. **Budget Revision - Sheriff Office Grant**
This budget revision accepts a $25,000 grant received from the Jonas Foundation for use at the Sheriff's office, with no local match required.

19. **Budget Revision - Animal Care and Enforcement Donated Funds**
This budget revision allows Animal Care & Enforcement to use $10,000 in funds donated by Deb Hall, $5,000 for general supplies needed and $5,000 for adoptions.

20. **Budget Revision - DSS additional LINKS Funding**
This budget revision adds $11,400 in additional LINKS funding DSS has received from the state for FY 27 to assist the needs of children who are eligible for LINKS services.

21. **Budget Transfer - Lower Cedar Valley Industrial Park**
This budget transfer moves $50,000 from the Evergreen Project to the Bolick Property Project to allow for preliminary engineering and other soft costs.

22. **Application Operation Lighthouse**
The Sheriff's office is seeking approval to apply for a grant for Internet Crimes Against Children.

23. **Bernhardt Foundation Grant Approval**
The Sheriff's office is seeking approval to apply for the Bernhardt Foundation Grant to purchase CPR and medical manikins for canines.

24. **DOJ Grant Application**
The Sheriff's office is seeking approval to submit a DOJ grant application for the creation of a narcotics officer position and the equipment needed to operate. This is a 3-year funded grant with no local match.

25. **Resolution to Approve New Capital Outlay Loan**
Approval is requested of this resolution to approve the new capital loan for $1.562 million with United Community Bank having the lowest bid at 3.83% interest for 59 months with a total of 9 bids received.

26. **Amended North Caldwell EMS Response Contract with Watauga County**
This amended contract with Watauga County EMS to respond as the primary EMS provider to EMS calls in Northern Caldwell County north of Blackberry Road for an annual payment of $20,000 to Watauga County with a typical CPI inflation index.

27. **Appointment of Jerrell Suddreth to DSS Advisory Board**
Request for appointment of Jerrell Suddreth to serve on the DSS Advisory Board for a three-year term to expire August 1, 2029.

28. **Approval of Regular and Closed Session Minutes of July 27, 2026, Board of Commissioners Meeting**
Approval of regular and closed session minutes from July 27, 2026, Board of Commissioners meeting was requested.

29. **Budget Revision – 911 Fund Equipment for New Comm Center**
This budget revision allows for $575,512 in 911 Funds to purchase equipment/consoles for the new communications center.

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

## Closed Session

30. **Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(4)**

Chairman Church made a motion to enter closed session at 7:46 PM.
The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Branch made a motion to exit closed session at 9:15 PM.
The motion carried unanimously.

## Adjourn

With there being no more business, Commissioner Starnes made a motion to adjourn at 9:16 PM.
The motion carried unanimously.

BK 2173 PG 1944 - 1944 (1)
This document presented and filed:
08/26/2026 01:04:21 PM

Fee $0.00
10122477
Caldwell County North Carolina
Wayne L. Rash, Register of Deeds

# RESOLUTION

**15-2026**

## 2026 LADY SPARTANS SOFTBALL
## NORTH CAROLINA 6-A STATE CHAMPIONS

**WHEREAS**, the 2026 South Caldwell Lady Spartans Softball Team demonstrated exceptional skill, dedication, and teamwork throughout the season, culminating in their remarkable victory as North Carolina 6-A State Champions; and

**WHEREAS**, the players, coaches, and support staff exhibited unwavering commitment, overcoming formidable opponents and challenges to earn their well-deserved title; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout the playoff series, the Lady Spartans showcased outstanding sportsmanship, resilience in high-pressure moments, and respect for their competitors; and

**WHEREAS**, the championship team has brought immense pride to their school, community, and families, inspiring young athletes and setting a powerful example of excellence and determination; and

**WHEREAS**, the accomplishments of the 2026 Lady Spartans Softball Team reflect the values of hard work, perseverance, and unity that we cherish and wish to celebrate.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners hereby officially congratulates the 2026 Lady Spartans Softball Team for clinching the North Carolina 6-A State Softball Championship, acknowledges the extraordinary efforts of Head Coach Casey Justice, other coaching staff, and each team member for their contributions to this historic achievement, and this Board expresses its utmost admiration for the team's competitive spirit and for serving as role models of leadership, integrity, and excellence.

Adopted this the 24th day of August 2026.

Randy T. Church, Chairman

Attest:

Tasha Brown, Clerk to the Board

**MEMORANDUM**

THRU: Shane Fox, County Manager

TO: Caldwell County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Jason Pennell, Interim Tax Administrator

SUBJECT: 2026 Charge to the Interim Tax Collector

DATE: August 24, 2026

Requires Board Action

In accordance with NCGS 105-321 (b) charge of 2026 taxes submitted for the Board's information, approval, and charge to the interim tax collector for the collection of 2026 taxes indicated.

2026 Outstanding Taxes

| | |
|---|---|
| 2026 Real & Personal Taxes County Taxes Only<br>Vehicle Taxes Listed Separately | $ 14,546,161.74 |
| Total 2026 Outstanding | $ 14,546,161.74 – 27.83% |

A report on all taxes charged is provided for your information.

Request this charge be accepted and these outstanding taxes be charged to the interim tax collector.

In accordance with NCGS 105-321 & 352 requests the attached tax receipt charge is authenticated by the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners for 2026 taxes.

I, Jason Pennell, do hereby affirm that this tax receipt charge is a true and accurate report of the status of the tax levy for Caldwell County.

Jason Pennell, Interim Tax Administrator

NORTH CAROLINA, CALDWELL COUNTY

I, Candace W. McLean, Notary Public, do hereby certify that Jason Pennell personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing instrument.

Witness my hand and official seal, this the 24 day of August 2026.

Candace W McLean
Notary Public

My Commission Expires: September 22, 2030



**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**COUNTY OF CALDWELL**

To the Tax Collector of the County of Caldwell:

You are hereby authorized, empowered, and commanded to collect the taxes for 2026 set forth in the tax records filed in the office of the Caldwell County Tax Collector and in the tax, receipts herewith delivered to you, in the amounts and from the taxpayers likewise therein set forth. Such taxes are hereby declared to be a first lien upon all real property of the respective taxpayers in the County of Caldwell, and this order shall be a full and sufficient authority to direct, require, and enable you to levy on and sell any real or personal property of such taxpayers, for and on account thereof, in accordance with law.

Witness my hand and official seal, this 24th day of August 2026

_____(Seal)
Randy T. Church, Chairman
Caldwell County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Tasha Brown
Tasha Brown, Clerk to the Board

CALDWELL COUNTY
18 41
NORTH CAROLINA

Fee $0.00
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Caldwell County North Carolina
Wayne L. Rash, Register of Deeds
BK 2173 PG 1946 - 1948 (3)
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# RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF CALDWELL, NORTH CAROLINA APPROVING AN INSTALLMENT FINANCING AGREEMENT TO FINANCE VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT AND DELIVERY THEREOF AND PROVIDING FOR CERTAIN OTHER RELATED MATTERS

*WHEREAS*, the County of Caldwell, North Carolina (the "*County*") is a political subdivision validly existing under the constitution, statutes and laws of the State of North Carolina (the "*State*");

*WHEREAS*, the County has the power, pursuant to the General Statutes of North Carolina to (1) enter into installment contracts in order to purchase, or finance or refinance the purchase of, real or personal property and to finance or refinance the construction or repair of fixtures or improvements on real property and (2) create a security interest in some or all of the property financed or refinanced to secure repayment of the purchase price;

*WHEREAS*, the Board of Commissioners of the County (the "*Board of Commissioners*") has determined that it is in the best interest of the County to enter into an installment financing (the "*Agreement*") with United Community Bank or one of its affiliates (the "*Lender*") in accordance with its proposal dated August 5, 2026 in order to obtain funds to pay the costs of the acquisition and installation of vehicles and equipment (collectively, the "*Projects*"), and to put a security interest in all or a portion of the Projects in favor of the Lender in order to provide security for the County's obligations under the Agreement;

*WHEREAS*, the County will enter into the Agreement in an aggregate principal amount of not to exceed $1,565,000;

*WHEREAS*, there has been made available to the Board of Commissioners in the office of the County's Finance Officer the form of the Agreement which the County proposes to approve, enter into and deliver, as applicable, to effectuate the proposed financing at an interest rate as specified in the Agreement and in the bid summary provided to the Board of Commissioners; and

*WHEREAS*, it appears that the Agreement is in appropriate form and is an appropriate instrument for the purposes intended;

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CALDWELL, NORTH CAROLINA, AS FOLLOWS:*

Section 1. ***Ratification of Prior Actions.*** All actions of the County Manager, the County Attorney, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and their respective designees in effectuating the proposed financing are approved, ratified and authorized pursuant to and in accordance with the transactions contemplated by the Agreement.

Section 2. ***Approval, Authorization and Execution of Agreement.*** The Board of Commissioners approves the Projects in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, which will be a valid, legal and binding obligation of the County in accordance with its terms. The Board of Commissioners approves the amount advanced by the Lender to the County pursuant to the Agreement in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed $1,565,000 at an annual interest rate (in the absence of default or change in tax status) shall not exceed 3.83%, and the financing term shall not exceed five (5) years from closing. The form, terms and content of the Agreement are in all respects authorized, approved and confirmed. The County Manager, the County Attorney, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, or their respective designees (the "*Authorized Officers*"), are authorized, empowered and directed to execute and deliver the Agreement for and on behalf of the County, including necessary counterparts, in substantially the form made available to the Board of Commissioners, but with

such changes, modifications, additions or deletions therein as they may deem necessary, desirable or appropriate, their execution thereof to constitute conclusive evidence of the approval of the Board of Commissioners of any and all such changes, modifications, additions or deletions. From and after the execution and delivery of the Agreement, each Authorized Officer is authorized, empowered and directed to do all such acts and things and to execute all such documents as may be necessary to carry out and comply with the provisions of the Agreement as executed.

Section 3. ***Further Actions.*** Each Authorized Officer is designated as the County's representative to act on behalf of the County in connection with the transactions contemplated by the Agreement. The Authorized Officers are authorized and directed to proceed with the Projects in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, and to seek opinions on matters of law from the County Attorney, which the County Attorney is authorized to furnish on behalf of the County, and opinions of law from such other attorneys for all documents contemplated under this Resolution as required by law. The Authorized Officers are authorized to designate one or more employees of the County to take all actions which they are authorized to perform under this Resolution, and each is in all respects authorized on behalf of the County to supply all information pertaining to the transactions contemplated by the Agreement. The Authorized Officers are authorized to execute and deliver for and on behalf of the County any and all additional certificates, documents, opinions or other papers and perform all other acts as may be required by the Agreement or as they may deem necessary or appropriate to implement and carry out the intent and purposes of this Resolution. Any and all acts of the Authorized Officers may be done individually or collectively.

Section 4. ***Reimbursement.*** The County intends that the adoption of this resolution will be a declaration of the County's official intent to reimburse expenditures for the Projects that are to be financed from the proceeds of the Lender financing described above. The County intends that funds that have been advanced, or that may be advanced, from the County's general fund or any other County fund related to the Projects, for project costs may be reimbursed from the financing proceeds.

Section 5. ***Severability.*** If any section, phrase or provision of this Resolution is for any reason declared invalid, such declaration will not affect the validity of the remainder of the sections, phrases or provisions of this Resolution.

Section 6. ***Repealer.*** All motions, orders, resolutions, ordinances and parts thereof in conflict herewith are repealed.

Section 7. ***Effective Date.*** This Resolution is effective on the date of its adoption.

*PASSED, ADOPTED AND APPROVED* this 24th day of August, 2026.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA )
)
COUNTY OF CALDWELL ) ss:

I, TASHA BROWN, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners of the County of Caldwell, North Carolina, ***DO HEREBY CERTIFY*** that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of a resolution entitled "**RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF CALDWELL, NORTH CAROLINA APPROVING AN INSTALLMENT FINANCING AGREEMENT TO FINANCE VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT AND DELIVERY THEREOF AND PROVIDING FOR CERTAIN OTHER RELATED MATTERS**" adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Caldwell, North Carolina at a meeting held on the 24th day of August, 2026.

***WITNESS*** my hand and the corporate seal of the County of Caldwell, North Carolina, this the 24th day of August, 2026.

Tasha Brown
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners
County of Caldwell, North Carolina

**THIS EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGREEMENT** (hereinafter "Agreement"), is made and entered into effective the 1st day of July 2026, by and between **CALDWELL COUNTY**, a body politic, organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of North Carolina (hereinafter "Caldwell"), and **WATAUGA COUNTY**, a body politic, organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of North Carolina (hereinafter "Watauga"):

**WITNESSETH**

**WHEREAS**, Caldwell and Watauga are counties located in the mountains of North Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, the terrain of these counties is not conducive to quick response by emergency vehicles; and

**WHEREAS**, Caldwell and Watauga counties desire to decrease response time and provide better ambulance service for the citizens along the Caldwell-Watauga border; and

**WHEREAS**, both the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners and the Watauga County Board of Commissioners are desirous of maintaining this mutually beneficial relationship for the benefit of their respective constituents; and

**WHEREAS**, the counties desire to set forth the agreement for Emergency Medical Services;

**NOW, THEREFORE,** in consideration of the terms and conditions as set forth herein, Caldwell and Watauga hereby agree as follows:

1. Watauga County shall provide emergency medical response service to Northern Caldwell Caldwell County on the following roads and attached streets:

| Road | Address Range |
|---|---|
| Blowing Rock Blvd/US HWY 321 | 5585 – County Line |
| Valley Blvd (Town of Blowing Rock) | All |
| The Rock Rd (Town of Blowing Rock) | All |
| Pinnacle Ave (Town of Blowing Rock) | All |
| Green Hill Rd (Town of Blowing Rock) | All |
| Main St (Town of Blowing Rock) | All |
| US HWY 221 | All |
| Globe Rd | 7450-County Line |
| Old Johns River Rd | All |
| Hemlock Ridge Rd | All |
| Blue Ridge Parkway | All |

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Caldwell County North Carolina
Wayne L. Rash, Register of Deeds

2. Watauga County shall provide ambulance and emergency medical response service within the municipal limits of the Town of Blowing Rock.

3. Caldwell County shall compensate Watauga County in the sum of $20,000.00 related to the provision of these services, as modified by the formula set forth below, which shall be modified each year on the anniversary date of the signing of this agreement:

   a. This adjustment shall reflect the annual increase or decrease of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), South Urban Size B/C, as published by the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

4. Watauga County shall calculate the adjustment based upon the most recent December annual report of Watauga County as compared to the report of the previous December. (For example, the December 1, 2026, adjustment will reflect the CPI changes between December 2025 and December 2026). Watauga County shall notify Caldwell County of this adjusted rate to be effective for the following fiscal year beginning July 1st.

5. For any incident to which an EMS provider responds under this Agreement, the county whose EMS provider responds to and provides services for that incident shall be solely responsible for billing the patient or other responsible party. The responding county shall bill, collect, and retain all payments and revenues from such services in accordance with its EMS rates, policies, and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

6. Watauga County shall operate this service on a twenty-four (24) hour basis, seven (7) days per week.

7. Watauga County shall maintain at least the current standard of care currently provided by the emergency medical response services to their respective coverage areas.

8. The term of this agreement shall be until 30 June 2027, and shall automatically renew for successive one-year periods unless either County provides notice to the other at least ninety (90) days prior to the expiration of the then existing term in order to provide ample opportunity for alternative emergency service arrangements to be made. Further, either party may terminate this agreement upon ninety (90) days written notice to the other party.

9. To the extent allowed by law, Caldwell County agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Watauga County for any and all liability arising out of the terms or performance of this contract for actions by Caldwell County. To the extent allowed by law, Watauga County agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Caldwell County for any and all liability arising out of the terms or performance of this contract for actions by Watauga County.

10. No terms of this contract shall be construed as to create a waiver of sovereign immunity as to any third party.

11. Caldwell County and Watauga County shall not be held responsible for incidental or consequential damages to the substation, emergency responder, or third party as a result of any breach of this agreement, or for any Acts of God, riot, war, civil unrest, or impossibility beyond

the control of the parties causing them to be unable to perform under this agreement.

12. The terms, covenants and conditions of this agreement herein contained shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of and shall be enforceable by Caldwell County and Watauga County and by their respective successors and assigns. The duties and responsibilities as well as the rights of each party under this contract may not be assigned by either party without the written consent of the other party.

13. All notices and written consents required under this agreement shall be deemed properly served upon mailing by certified United States Mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, addressed to the party to whom directed at the following address or at such other address as may be from time to time designated in writing.

14. This agreement represents the entire and integrated agreement between Caldwell County and Watauga County and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations or agreements between the parties. No modification hereof or other purported agreement of the parties shall be enforceable unless the same is in writing and signed by both Watauga County and Caldwell County.

15. Any and all notices to be sent to the parties shall be sent to the following addresses:

**To Caldwell County:**
Shane Fox, County Manager
Caldwell County Board of Commissioners
P.O. Box 2200
Lenoir, NC 28645

**To Watauga County:**
Deron T. Geouque, County Manager
Watauga County Board of Commissioners
814 W. King Street, Suite 205
Boone, NC 28607

16. If any portion of this contract shall be deemed to be unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction all remaining provision of this contract shall remain in full force and effect. This contract shall not be deemed to have been drafted by either party but has been adopted by each party as a statement of their mutual agreement and understanding.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, both Watauga County and Caldwell County have signed and sealed this agreement, this the 24th day of August 2026.

**CALDWELL COUNTY**

By: Randy T. Church, Chairman

Attest:

Clerk, Caldwell County Board of Commissioners

**WATAUGA COUNTY**

By: Braxton Eggers, Chairman

Attest:

Clerk, Watauga County Board of Commissioners

*This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.*

Caldwell County Finance Officer

Watauga County Finance Officer