# MEETING MINUTES

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**Tuesday, June 2, 2026**

The Watauga County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Commissioners' Board Room located in the Watauga County Administration Building in Boone, North Carolina.

## 1. CALL REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER

Chairman Eggers called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The following were present:

PRESENT: Braxton Eggers, Chairman
Todd Castle, Vice-Chairman
Emily Greene, Commissioner
Tim Hodges, Commissioner
Ronnie Marsh, Commissioner
Nathan Miller, County Attorney
Deron Geouque, County Manager
Madison Mathis, Clerk to the Board

Commissioner Hodges offered the prayer and Commissioner Greene led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Eggers presented the May 7 and May 8, 2026, special meeting minutes as well as the May 19, 2026, regular meeting and closed session minutes.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the May 7, 2026, special meeting minutes as presented.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the May 8, 2026, special meeting minutes as presented.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the May 19, 2026, regular meeting minutes as presented.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the May 19, 2026, closed session minutes as presented.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

## 3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Eggers called for additions or corrections to the June 2, 2026, agenda.

County Attorney Miller requested an amendment to the agenda to add Item 7E, Purchase of an Easement on the Wilder Property for the Hidden Pond Tower Site.

Chairman Eggers noted a correction to the proposed Resolution Commemorating America's 250th Anniversary, stating that the adoption date should be June 2, 2026, rather than February 17, 2026, as reflected in the Board packet.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to approve the June 2, 2026, agenda as amended.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

## 4. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people spoke during public comment:

- **George Bartholomew -** representing the Watauga Amateur Radio Club (WARC), invited the Board of Commissioners and County Manager Geouque to attend the Club's Field Day operation on June 27, 2026, at the Davant Field Pavilion.

- **Stella Anderson -** spoke in support of the Board of Elections budget request, citing staffing needs and upcoming election administration requirements.

- **Misty Mayfield -** spoke in support of the Board of Elections budget request, advocating for increased compensation for election workers and temporary staff.

- **Cathy Williamson -** spoke in support of fully funding the Board of Elections budget request, emphasizing the importance of election administration resources.

- **Donna Lisenby -** spoke in support of the Board of Elections budget request, citing increased workloads and election-related responsibilities.

## 5. PROPOSED RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY

Chairman Eggers presented a proposed resolution commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America and recognizing the nation's founding ideals and historical significance.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to adopt the resolution formally recognizing and celebrating this milestone throughout 2026.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

## 6. PROPOSED PROCLAMATION FOR ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Ms. Christie Markham, Ms. Angie Boitnotte, and Ms. Stevie Welborn presented a proclamation declaring June 15, 2026, as "World Elder Abuse Awareness Day" in North Carolina.

Board members discussed elder abuse awareness, noted that cases occur locally, and expressed appreciation to the staff for their work on behalf of older adults.

Commissioner Hodges, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to approve the proclamation declaring June 15, 2026, as "World Elder Abuse Awareness Day" in North Carolina.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

## 7. EMERGENCY SERVICES MATTERS

A. ***Request to Purchase New Facility Bi-Directional Amplifier (BDA) System***

Mr. Will Holt, Emergency Services Director, requested the Board approve the purchase and installation of a Bi-Directional Amplifier (BDA) system for the new Emergency Services facility. This system is required to meet applicable NFPA and Fire Prevention Code standards for Emergency Responder Communication Enhancement Systems (ERCES). Two quotes were obtained for the project, with the lowest responsive quote submitted by Mobile Communications America (MCA) in the amount of $52,656.47. Funding for this purchase is included in the approved project budget for the facility.

Mr. Holt responded to questions regarding the location of the equipment and the anticipated installation schedule.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to approve the purchase and installation of the BDA system for the new Emergency Services facility in the amount of $52,656.47, using budgeted project funds.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

**B.** ***Request to Purchase Additional Priority Dispatch Software License***

Mr. Will Holt, Emergency Services Director, requested the Board approve the purchase of additional Priority Dispatch software licenses in the amount of $26,821.30. This software is used for standardized call processing for Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement, and expands the County's existing licensing across all disciplines. The purchase is funded entirely by 911 surcharge funds.

Mr. Holt responded to questions regarding ongoing maintenance costs and the funding source for the purchase.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the purchase of Priority Dispatch software licenses in the amount of $26,821.30, funded through 911 surcharge funds.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

**C.** ***Request to Purchase New Facility CAD and Mapping License***

Mr. Will Holt, Emergency Services Director, requested the Board approve the purchase of a CAD and mapping software license for the new Emergency Services facility in the amount of $23,750.30. This license supports the 6th approved CAD position and expands existing system licensing to cover all positions at the primary and backup center. The cost of this license is 100% funded by 911 surcharge funds.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to approve the CAD and mapping license purchase in the amount of $23,750.30, funded 100% by 911 surcharge funds.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

**D. *Change Order Request for New Facility Tower Construction***

Mr. Will Holt, Emergency Services Director, requested the Board approve a change order in the amount of $6,859.70 for the new Emergency Services Facility tower construction. The change is necessary due to utility locations differing from those identified during the initial 811 utility locate process. Ground-penetrating radar identified proximity concerns, and the contractor will utilize vacuum excavation instead of traditional excavation to protect existing utilities and assist with final site restoration.

Mr. Holt and County Attorney Miller responded to questions regarding utility location responsibility and potential recourse for associated costs. Commissioner Marsh noted a question regarding recovery of costs related to utility locating services. Vice-Chairman Castle expressed appreciation to the contractor for identifying the issue.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to approve the change order in the amount of $6,859.70, funded through the Priority 1 grant.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

**E. *Hidden Pond Tower Site Easement***

County Attorney Miller reported that an easement across the Wilder property was needed to provide access to the Hidden Pond telecommunications tower site. Mr. Miller stated that an easement agreement had been executed by the property owner and presented the agreement to the Board for consideration. The proposed consideration for the easement was $13,600.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to accept the easement agreement across the Wilder property for the Hidden Pond telecommunications tower site, authorize payment of $13,600, and direct staff to record the easement.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

## 8. ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET ORDINANCE

The Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Ordinance was presented for adoption. Included were the changes recommended by the Board and County Manager.

County Manager Geouque noted the budget process, including the budget work sessions and public hearings previously held.

Board members expressed appreciation to County staff, elected officials, outside agencies, non-profits, and citizens who participated in the budget process. Commissioners also acknowledged the challenges of balancing departmental requests, maintaining county services, and addressing significant operational needs while proposing no county property tax increase. Commissioners specifically noted the County's assumption of ambulance services and other operational priorities that were considered during the budget process.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Ordinance as presented.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5<br>Nay – 0

## 9. MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

**A. *Request to Purchase Furniture for Medic Base 2***

Staff requested Board approval to purchase the furniture for Medic Base 2 in the amount of $29,553.83 from PBI, Inc. The County has used PBI for other projects including the new EMS facility and at the Human Services Building.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to approve the purchase of furniture for Medic Base 2 in the amount of $29,553.83 from PBI, Inc.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5<br>Nay – 0

**B. *Request to Purchase Furniture for Medic Base 3***

Staff requested Board approval to purchase the furniture for Medic Base 3 in the amount of $17,620.44 from PBI, Inc. The County has used PBI for other projects including the new EMS facility and at the Human Services Building.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the purchase of furniture for Medic Base 3 in the amount of $17,620.44 from PBI, Inc.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

**C. *Boards and Commissions***

The term of Pat Brown on the Valle Crucis Historic Preservation Commission has ended due to relocation outside the Valle Crucis Historic District. Membership on the Commission requires residency within the historic district; therefore, Mr. Brown is no longer eligible to serve, resulting in a vacancy.

Staff will seek qualified applicants to fill the vacancy. Individuals interested in serving must meet the residency requirement and may submit a volunteer application for Board consideration.

No action was required from the Board at that time.

**D. *July Meeting Schedule***

Due to the upcoming holiday, the County Manager recommended cancelling the first meeting in July. Should a meeting be necessary, a Special Called meeting could be scheduled. July 21, 2026 would be the only scheduled meeting of the Board for that month.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to cancel the July 7, 2026 regular scheduled meeting.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

**E. *Announcements***

No announcements.

## 10. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

- **Chairman Eggers -** welcomed new Department of Social Services Director Julie Peck to the County and expressed appreciation to Ms. Boitnotte, staff, and all those who attended the meeting and participated in the budget process.

- **Vice-Chairman Castle -** noted an upcoming event at the Watauga County Public Library.

- **Commissioner Marsh –** invited citizens to participate in the upcoming America's 250th Anniversary commemoration events and celebration.

## 11. BREAK

## 12. CLOSED SESSION

At 6:25 p.m., Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to enter Closed Session pursuant to G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) to discuss matters protected by attorney–client privilege, including Case No. 5:25-cv-157; pursuant to G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(5) to consider matters related to the acquisition of real property; and pursuant to G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(6) to discuss personnel matters.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

At 7:59 p.m., Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to resume the open meeting.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

## 13. ADJOURN

At 8:00 p.m., Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE:** Aye – 5
Nay – 0

**Braxton Eggers, Chairman**

**ATTEST:** Madison Mathis, Clerk to the Board