

MEETING MINUTES

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, September 15, 2026

The Watauga County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 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
 Ronnie Marsh, Commissioner
 Nathan Miller, County Attorney
 Deron Geouque, County Manager
 Madison Mathis, Clerk to the Board

[Clerk's Note: Commissioner Hodges was not in attendance due to a prior engagement.]

Commissioner Marsh offered the prayer and Chairman Eggers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Eggers presented the September 1, 2026, regular and closed session meeting minutes.

Chairman Eggers requested a correction to the regular meeting minutes under Miscellaneous Administrative Matters: Item C, noting that he voted against Change Order Request #9 for Valle Crucis School.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to approve the September 1, 2026, regular meeting minutes as amended.

VOTE: Aye – 4
 Nay – 0
 Absent – 1 (Hodges)

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to approve the September 1, 2026, closed session minutes as presented.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Eggers called for additions or corrections to the September 15, 2026, agenda.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to approve the September 15, 2026, agenda as presented.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

No one signed up to speak during public comment at this time.

5. PUBLIC HEARING TO ALLOW CITIZEN COMMENT ON THE WATAUGA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT DISASTER RECOVERY – COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM APPLICATION

Chairman Eggers stated that a public hearing was scheduled to allow citizen comment on Watauga County's proposed application for the Renew NC Community Infrastructure Program, a Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program. The proposed application would assist Watauga Emergency Services with improving communication effectiveness and redundancy. The public hearing was being held as part of the CDBG-DR grant application process, following the Board's adoption of the required resolution affirming the County's intent to apply for funding.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to open the public hearing at 5:33 p.m.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

No one signed up to speak.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to close the public hearing at 5:33 p.m.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

6. PUBLIC HEARING TO ALLOW CITIZEN COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED WATAUGA COUNTY AMBULANCE FRANCHISE ORDINANCE

Chairman Eggers stated that a public hearing was scheduled to allow citizen comment on the proposed Watauga County Ambulance Franchise Ordinance. The proposed ordinance would establish requirements for the granting of ambulance service franchises within Watauga County, including application requirements, operational standards, vehicle and equipment requirements, reporting requirements, enforcement provisions, and continuation of the EMS Advisory Committee. The proposed ordinance reflected the transition from a private provider to a County-operated EMS system. The EMS Advisory Committee had been encouraged to review the proposed ordinance and recommend any changes it deemed appropriate; no additional changes were recommended.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to open the public hearing at 5:34 p.m.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

No one signed up to speak.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to close the public hearing at 5:34 p.m.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to adopt the Watauga County Ambulance Franchise Ordinance as presented.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

7. PUBLIC HEARING TO ALLOW CITIZEN COMMENT ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 11 OF THE WATAUGA COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES

Chairman Eggers stated that a public hearing was scheduled to allow citizen comment on proposed amendments to Chapter 11 of the Watauga County Code of Ordinances regarding the installation and maintenance of electronic access gates for gated communities. The proposed amendments addressed emergency access provisions, including radio transceiver gate activation for public safety agencies, fail-open and manual override requirements, dual key lock boxes, gate identification placards, and maintenance and inspection standards. The proposed amendments had been reviewed by the Watauga County Planning Board and were recommended for consideration by the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to open the public hearing at 5:36 p.m.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

No one signed up to speak.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to close the public hearing at 5:37 p.m.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to adopt the proposed amendments to Chapter 11 of the Watauga County Code of Ordinances as presented.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

8. BOONE GORGE PARK ON THE MIDDLE FORK GREENWAY CHANGE ORDER #1 REQUEST

Carrie Caviness, Senior Engineer with Destination by Design, presented Change Order #1 for the Boone Gorge Park project on the Middle Fork Greenway. The project was approximately 80% complete, with construction expected to be completed by the end of October, weather permitting. The contract with MBI to construct Boone Gorge Park was \$3,823,590.24. Change Order #1 included items totaling \$243,636.45. The Middle Fork Greenway had sufficient funds available to cover the full cost of the change order.

Attorney Miller asked whether the pavilion was included in the original bid package. Ms. Caviness confirmed that it was included and had been incorporated back into the original unit price.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to approve Change Order #1 with MBI in the amount of \$243,636.45.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

9. BID AWARD REQUEST FOR 2026 CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Mr. Robert Marsh, Maintenance Director, requested approval to award a contract for weekend custodial services at the Watauga County Recreation Center, County Parks, outdoor restrooms, and Emergency Services Facility. Following two rounds of bidding, ServiceMaster Clean submitted the only bid of \$100,620 for the Recreation Center and County Parks and agreed to provide cleaning services at the Emergency Services Facility for an additional \$49,440, for a total contract amount of \$150,060. The FY 2026-27 Maintenance budget required an \$8,781 transfer from the Administrative Contingency Fund to cover the contract, with a budget amendment to be presented at a future meeting. Services were scheduled to begin November 1, 2026.

During discussion, Commissioner Marsh asked whether County staff currently performed cleaning services at the Recreation Center on weekends. Mr. Robert Marsh confirmed that County staff performed the interior cleaning and could be reassigned to weekdays. Commissioner Greene asked about the strategy and schedule for cleaning the parks. Mr. Marsh explained the cleaning services would be performed according to established needs and schedules. Vice-Chairman Castle asked about the size of the cleaning crew and whether hiring a County employee rather than contracting for the services had been considered. Mr. Marsh explained that hiring a full-time custodian with benefits would be more costly. He also noted that Parks and Recreation Director Scott Carter had contacted the Watauga County Board of Education, which provided a favorable reference for ServiceMaster Clean.

Commissioner Marsh asked whether the contract would be reviewed by County Attorney Miller. Mr. Marsh confirmed that the contract would be provided to Attorney Miller for review. Commissioners requested that the performance of the contracted services be reviewed after three to six months due to the cost of the contract.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to award the contract to ServiceMaster Clean for \$150,060 and approve the \$8,781 Administrative Budget Amendment, contingent upon review and approval of the contract by Attorney Miller.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0

Absent – 1 (Hodges)

10. EMERGENCY SERVICES MATTERS

A. Recorder Maintenance Contract Renewal

Mr. Will Holt, Emergency Services Director, requested approval to renew the maintenance contract with Carolina Recording Systems for recorders at the primary and back-up PSAPs. The renewal is for \$30,530.50, and Emergency Telephone System Fund (ETSF) funds are available for this purpose.

Vice-Chairman Castle asked about the storage of recordings. Mr. Holt provided information regarding the storage period and explained that the retention was at the request of the Sheriff's Office and for other related purposes.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to approve the renewal of the recorder maintenance contract with Carolina Recording Systems in the amount of \$30,530.50.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

B. LEPC Bylaws Update

Mr. Will Holt, Emergency Services Director, requested approval of the 2026 update to the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) bylaws. The updates were requested by North Carolina Emergency Management to better align the bylaws with federal requirements and had been approved by the LEPC at its April 14, 2026 meeting.

Commissioner Marsh asked whether the State had approved the updated bylaws. Mr. Holt confirmed that the bylaws had been approved.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to approve the 2026 LEPC bylaws.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

11. TAX MATTERS

A. *Monthly Collections Report*

Mr. Tyler Rash, Tax Administrator, presented the Monthly Collections Report for August 2026, and was present for questions and discussion.

The report was for information only; therefore, no action was required.

B. *Refunds and Releases*

Mr. Tyler Rash, Tax Administrator, presented the Refunds and Releases for August 2026, and was present for questions and discussion.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to accept the August 2026 Refunds and Releases Report.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

12. MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. *Boards and Commissions*

The Board considered appointments to the Watauga County Library Board, Valle Crucis Historic Preservation Commission, and Department of Social Services Board. The Library Board unanimously recommended the appointment of Ms. Cindy Lege to a new term ending in August 2030. Alyson Browett and Heidi Tester requested reappointment to the Valle Crucis Historic Preservation Commission for three-year terms and expressed their willingness to continue serving. The Department of Social Services Advisory Board recommended the reappointment of Ms. Annette Ward to a new term ending August 30, 2030. Ms. Ward previously served in an interim appointment to fill a vacancy.

Chairman Eggers recommended waiving the second reading.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to appoint Ms. Cindy Lege to the Watauga County Library Board; reappointed Alyson Browett and Heidi Tester to the Valle Crucis Historic Preservation Commission; and reappointed Ms. Annette Ward to the Department of Social Services Board.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

B. Announcements

County Manager Geouque announced that the High Country Council of Governments would hold its 51st Annual Banquet on Friday, October 16, 2026, at the Appalachian State University Grandview Ballroom. RSVPs were required by September 30, 2026.

13. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

- **Commissioner Marsh** - stated that Ms. Jennifer Triplett was attempting to attend the meeting to provide public comment. As she had missed the designated Public Comment period, Commissioner Marsh stated that she planned to provide the Commissioners with written comments at the conclusion of the meeting. Attorney Miller confirmed that Ms. Triplett could provide the written comments to the Board. Commissioner Marsh also encouraged the public to drive by Old Cove Creek Park to see the progress being made on the project.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Eggers allowed Ms. Jennifer Triplett to address the Board. Ms. Triplett expressed concerns regarding traffic and roadway safety near Angler Park and encouraged the Board to consider landowner rights when making decisions related to the property.

14. BREAK

15. CLOSED SESSION

At 6:17 p.m., Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to enter into Closed Session pursuant to G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) to discuss matters protected by attorney-client privilege.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

At 9:30 p.m., Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to resume the open meeting.

VOTE: Aye – 4

Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

16. ADJOURN

At 9:31 p.m., Chairman Eggers, seconded by Commissioner Greene, moved to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Hodges)

Braxton Eggers, Chairman

ATTEST: Madison Mathis, Clerk to the Board



ATTACHMENT A
TAX MONTHLY
COLLECTIONS REPORT

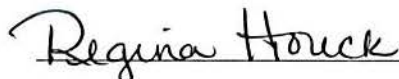
Monthly Collections Report

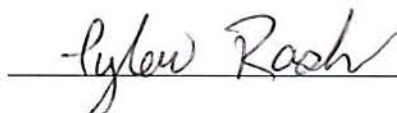
Watauga County

Bank deposits of the following amounts have been made and credited to the account of Watauga County. The reported totals do not include small shortages and overages reported to the Watauga County Finance Officer

Monthly Report August 2026

	<u>Current Month</u> <u>Collections</u>	<u>Current FY</u> <u>Collections</u>	<u>Current FY</u> <u>Percentage</u>	<u>Previous FY</u> <u>Percentage</u>
<u>General County</u>				
Taxes 2026	0.00	0.00		
Prior Year Taxes	26,143.65			
Solid Waste User Fees	3,951.28	0.00		
 Total County Funds	\$30,094.93	\$0.00		
 <u>Fire Districts</u>				
Foscoe Fire	425.86	0.00		
Boone Fire	765.07	0.00		
Fall Creek Service Dist.	6.03	0.00		
Beaver Dam Fire	32.97	0.00		
Stewart Simmons Fire	65.80	0.00		
Zionville Fire	75.88	0.00		
Cove Creek Fire	144.85	0.00		
Shawneehaw Fire	39.71	0.00		
Meat Camp Fire	99.89	0.00		
Deep Gap Fire	760.78	0.00		
Todd Fire	0.00	0.00		
Blowing Rock Fire	364.16	0.00		
M.C. Creston Fire	0.00	0.00		
Foscoe Service District	27.10	0.00		
Beech Mtn. Service Dist.	0.00	0.00		
Cove Creek Service Dist.	0.00	0.00		
Shawneehaw Service Dist	0.00	0.00		
 Total Fire Districts	2,808.10	-		
 <u>Towns</u>				
Boone	9,408.72	0.00		
Municipal Services	0.00	0.00		
 Total Town Taxes	\$9,408.72	\$0.00		
 Total Amount Collected	\$42,311.75	\$0.00		

 Tax Collections Director

 Tax Administrator



ATTACHMENT B

TAX REFUNDS AND RELEASES

RELEASES - 08/01/2026 TO 08/31/2026

OWNER NAME AND ADDRESS		CAT YEAR PROPERTY REASON	BILL	EFF DATE	JUR	REF NO	VALUE	CHARGE	AMOUNT
1761876 FREDRICKSON, THOMAS FREDRICKSON, ANNETTE 354 DARE LN DEEP GAP, NC 28618		RE 2022	1000083	08/04/2026			379,600	F10	189.80
		2950-36-7654-000			F10			G01	1,207.12
		TAX ADJUSTMENTS				12729			-----
		CORRECTION TO COMPLETION % OF HOME.							1,396.92
1761876 FREDRICKSON, THOMAS FREDRICKSON, ANNETTE 354 DARE LN DEEP GAP, NC 28618		RE 2022	1000083	08/04/2026			0	F10	87.60
		2950-36-7654-000			F10			G01	557.14
		TAX RELEASES				12730			-----
		BILLING ERROR. RELEASING AND REBILLING.							644.74
1761876 FREDRICKSON, THOMAS FREDRICKSON, ANNETTE 354 DARE LN DEEP GAP, NC 28618		RE 2023	1000372	08/04/2026			0	F10	292.00
		2950-36-7654-000			F10			G01	1,857.12
		TAX RELEASES				12731		SWF	102.87
		BILLING ERROR. RELEASING AND REBILLING.							-----
1761876 FREDRICKSON, THOMAS FREDRICKSON, ANNETTE 354 DARE LN DEEP GAP, NC 28618		RE 2024	1000126	08/04/2026			0	F10	292.00
		2950-36-7654-000			F10			G01	1,857.12
		TAX RELEASES				12732			-----
		BILLING ERROR. RELEASING AND REBILLING.							2,149.12
DETAIL SUMMARY		COUNT: 4		RELEASES - TOTAL			379,600		6,442.77

RELEASES - 08/01/2026 TO 08/31/2026

RELEASES - CHARGE SUMMARY FOR ALL CLERKS

YEAR				CAT	CHARGE	AMOUNT
	2022	RE	F10	DEEP GAP FIRE RE		277.40
	2022	RE	G01	WATAUGA COUNTY RE		1,764.26
	2022 TOTAL					2,041.66
	2023	RE	F10	DEEP GAP FIRE RE		292.00
	2023	RE	G01	WATAUGA COUNTY RE		1,857.12
	2023	RE	SWF	SANITATION USER FEE		102.87
	2023 TOTAL					2,251.99
	2024	RE	F10	DEEP GAP FIRE RE		292.00
	2024	RE	G01	WATAUGA COUNTY RE		1,857.12
	2024 TOTAL					2,149.12
	SUMMARY TOTAL					6,442.77

RELEASES - 08/01/2026 TO 08/31/2026

RELEASES - JURISDICTION SUMMARY FOR ALL CLERKS

JUR	YEAR	CHARGE	AMOUNT
F10	2022	F10 DEEP GAP FIRE RE	277.40
F10	2022	G01 WATAUGA COUNTY RE	1,764.26
F10	2023	F10 DEEP GAP FIRE RE	292.00
F10	2023	G01 WATAUGA COUNTY RE	1,857.12
F10	2023	SWF SANITATION USER FEE	102.87
F10	2024	F10 DEEP GAP FIRE RE	292.00
F10	2024	G01 WATAUGA COUNTY RE	1,857.12
F10 TOTAL			6,442.77
SUMMARY TOTAL			6,442.77