



Rutherford County

Meeting Minutes - Final

Board of Commissioners

Thursday, April 16, 2026

6:00 PM 289 N. Main St. Rutherfordton NC 28139 Commission
Chambers

I. Call to Order

Chairman King called the April 16, 2026 special meeting of the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners to order.

Present: 5 - Commissioner Bryan King, Commissioner Alan Toney, Commissioner Michael Benfield, Commissioner Hunter Haynes and Commissioner Donnie Haulk

A. Agenda Approval

Commissioner Benfield moved to approve the agenda. Vice Chairman Toney seconded the motion.

The vote on the motion was:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes and Commissioner Haulk

Nay: 0

II. New Business

A. [ID 26-4449](#) Administrative and Board Planning Workshop

Recess

6:00 P.M. *Recess*

6:51 P.M. *Reconvene*

Chairman King advised that meetings had been held with all departments regarding their requested budgets for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. A meeting would be held on April 20 with the Isothermal Community College Board of Trustees which would complete meetings with all departments and agencies. He presented a document showing a summary of each department's requests, and he highlighted several departments.

The Information Technology Department manages the annual review and prioritization of technology-related budget requests submitted by all County departments. All requests totaled \$452,535.00. After reviewing and prioritizing these items, IT recommended \$338,235 be allocated for capital hardware.

Capital software contained a request from the Sheriff's Office for a new tool used in evidence collection from mobile devices totaling \$22,000.

Software Maintenance totaled \$1,350,286 and hardware maintenance totaled \$168,600.

The Sheriff's Office budget included recommendations for adjustments to pay steps for certain officers, as well as increased costs for training and uniforms. The department is

also requesting an additional bailiff position.

The courthouse needs included an X-ray machine.

The Communications Center budget was also reviewed. The HVAC system at the backup site is not functioning and is included in the Capital Improvement Plan. Additionally, all handheld radios will need to be replaced.

The Detention Center is requesting expanded hours for medical and mental health services to better serve the population which is approximately 4,000 inmates annually. This would increase costs from \$383,000 to \$443,000.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has contacted legislators regarding potential funding for a new EMS building.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) budget remains complex due to Medicaid changes, with an estimated impact of \$1.8 million. Additional staffing and training will be required, particularly for Medicaid and SNAP programs. The state is currently utilizing its rainy day fund to support SNAP. The county is financially responsible for any errors identified by the state. Despite these challenges, Rutherford County's DSS maintains one of the highest performance ratings in the state.

A list of capital items was also included with major expenses primarily consisting of vehicle purchases. Revaluation costs are projected at \$1.5 million in the first year and \$250,000 annually thereafter. The plan also includes Viper radios. Vehicle costs continue to rise, particularly for the Sheriff's Office due to high mileage and wear and tear. Ambulances now cost approximately \$400,000 each, with replacement schedules based on usage and condition. Mr. Haulk added that alternative funding sources have previously been used for law enforcement vehicles.

Commissioner Haynes inquired whether leasing vehicles might be more cost-effective. Mr. King indicated the total projected cost is approximately \$13 million and noted that these funds would be designated as assigned needs. He clarified that future boards would retain the authority to revise these allocations.

Regarding the County Manager position, staff reported a productive meeting with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) guidance team. Initial steps in the recruitment process include developing a job profile, the application process, and interview procedures. Recommendations were provided to strengthen the search process, including updating the job description and involving the newly elected board. The process may begin shortly after the budget is finalized. NCACC will provide ongoing assistance as needed. A confidentiality agreement is being drafted and will be required for all participants in the hiring process.

Commissioners will receive a questionnaire to gather input on desired qualifications and priorities for the next County Manager. Key focus areas identified include stability and preparation. Additional timeline details will be provided at a later date

III. Adjournment

At 7:47 PM. Commissioner Haynes made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Haulk seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes and Commissioner Haulk

Nay: 0