



Rutherford County

Meeting Minutes - Final

Board of Commissioners

Monday, April 20, 2026

4:15 PM 289 N. Main St. Rutherfordton NC 28139 Commission
Chambers

I. Call to Order

Chairman King called the April 20, 2026 special meeting of the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners to order.

Present: 4 - Commissioner Bryan King, Commissioner Alan Toney, Commissioner Michael Benfield and Commissioner Hunter Haynes

Absent: 1 - 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: 4 - Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield and Commissioner Haynes

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 - Commissioner Haulk

II. New Business

- A. [ID 26-4456](#) Isothermal Community College Board of Trustees/Rutherford County Board of Commissioners Annual Budget Meeting

Attachments: [Isothermal Community College Budget Request 2026 2027.pdf](#)

Isothermal Community College Board of Trustees Chairman called this board to order.

Dr. Margaret Annunziata thanked the County Commissioners for the support they have provided to Isothermal Community College. She announced that there will be approximately 53,200 more square feet available for instruction in the next year which will provide jobs in health care such as EMT, Paramedic, nursing pathways. This is a mission of the college to connect people in the community with good jobs so they can support themselves and their families.

The current budget request of the college included an increase of \$465,500, which represents a 14.3% year-over-year increase. Although the College acknowledges the significance of this increase, it is imperative to note that 56% of the proposed increase is directly attributable to the fall 2026 opening of the Dr. Bobby F. England Health & Sciences Center. Specifically, additional expenses the College will incur include but are not limited to utilities, janitorial services, and insurance. This facility will allow the College

to double enrollment in nursing and other healthcare programming, which will result in a significant return on investment for workforce development in the healthcare sector of both Rutherford County and the greater Western North Carolina region.

As in past years, a primary driver for the proposed budget increase is a 3% cost of living adjustment across county personnel, including a rate of 7.65% for FICA and Medicare costs. Retirement currently remains static at 24.67% until the state adjusts this rate per the General Assembly's next biennial budget. The proposed budget also includes an approximately 4% adjustment to the president's current total compensation to address the absence of COLA adjustments in recent years, as well as to more closely align the county's share of this total with that of former Isothermal Community College presidents.

Other drivers include anticipated increases for janitorial services, utilities, and repairs to facilities. Of note, telephone costs will increase 32.4% with the addition of a new texting feature that enables advisors/faculty to text students with a goal of improving the student experience as well as increasing retention and completion rates. Additionally, per kilowatt and heating costs have again increased over the previous fiscal year. Water costs are expected to remain stable in FY27. The total \$57,000 increase in repairs to facilities request reflects the ongoing, actuals-based need to address critical findings from the 2024 Facilities Condition Assessment Program (FCAP) conducted by the State Construction Office. The college continues to leverage other funding resources for these projects, including State Capital Infrastructure Funds (SCIF) and capital allotment. However, it is critical to have adequate facility repair and maintenance funding to maintain systems and building functionality. Other factors contributing to the requested increase include additional groundskeeping needs, increased gasoline and vehicle repair costs, and anticipated increases in our insurance costs as well as the annual agreement with the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office to supply two campus resource officers.

III. Adjournment

At 4:38 P.M. Commissioner Benfield made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chairman Toney seconded the motion.

The motion carried by the following vote:

- Aye:** 4 - Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield and Commissioner Haynes
- Nay:** 0
- Absent:** 1 - Commissioner Haulk