



**Rutherford County Office Building  
289 N. Main Street  
Rutherfordton, NC 28139**

**Rutherford County  
Board of Commissioners  
Minutes of May 4, 2026**

**Monday, May 4, 2026  
6:00 PM**

**I. Call to Order**

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Chairman King called the May 4, 2026 meeting of the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners to order.

**Present: Chairman Bryan King, Vice Chairman Alan Toney, Commissioner Michael Benfield, Commissioner Hunter Haynes, and Commissioner Donnie Haulk.**

**A. Pledge of Allegiance**

County Commissioners led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**B. Agenda Approval**

**Vice Chairman Toney moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Benfield seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.

**II. Public Comments**

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Mr. Alan Hamrick urged the Board to prioritize regional schools for elementary schools, including reopening Mt Vernon Ruth. He also encouraged the Board to make budget decisions based on the future years to come not just the present.

Mr. Chuck Landever expressed the disadvantages that a tiny home development would bring to the Lake Lure area and how the Board should highly consider approving a 12 month moratorium.

Mr. Matthew Kirkland spoke on behalf of Prospect Baptist Church in reference to their concerns on the land use zoning, perk testing, and distance from Church and TJCA on a residential property at 252 Spencer Street, Ellenboro, NC.

Mr. Doug Stewart spoke on his concerns of the tiny home development on the environment and of the negative impact it could have on the Lake Lure community and resources.

Ms. Lori Hardin and Ms. Pam Swan spoke on the negative impacts the tiny home development could have on the Lake Lure community and proposed that the Board approve a 12 month moratorium.

Ms. Kimberly Sayles suggested the Board consider a smaller scale tiny home development. She spoke on the negative impacts that a tiny home development could have on the Lake Lure community, water, sewer, and roads.

Ms. Grayson Porter asked if there could be public meetings and discussions with the Board arranged as to converse amongst each other and the citizens on various topics.

Mr. Eric Gorny expressed the hardships that tax rates in the County have caused and his desire for the Board to reduce the tax rate for himself and other taxpayers

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### **III. Consent Agenda**

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**Vice Chairman Toney moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Benfield seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.

**Noes:** None

**Consent Agenda Items approved were:**

- A. ID-26-4447 Minutes of April 6, 2026 County Commissioners' Meeting**
- B. ID-26-4461 Minutes of April 16, 2026 Special County Commissioners' Meeting 1**
- C. ID-26-4462 Minutes of April 16, 2026 Special County Commissioners' Meeting 2**
- D. ID-26-4471 Minutes of April 20, 2026 Special County Commissioners Meeting**
- E. ID-26-4464 Tax Refunds and Releases**
  - Refund amount totaling \$894.14
  - Releases greater than \$100 totaling \$5,202.67
  - Releases less than \$100 totaling \$270.23
  - (A copy of these tax refunds and releases is typed in the Minute Book.)

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### **IV. Commissioners/Appointments**

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**A. ID-26-4460 EMS Week Proclamation**

EMS Operations' Manager Kaleb Johnson presented the 2026 EMS Week Proclamation for the Board's consideration. Historically, the Board of Commissioners has declared a week in May each year as "Emergency Medical Services Week." EMS Week in 2026 is May 17-23.

**Commissioner Benfield moved to approve the proclamation. Vice Chairman Toney seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield,  
Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.  
**Noes:** None

#### **EMS Week Proclamation**

**WHEREAS** emergency medical services are a vital public service; and

**WHEREAS** the members of emergency medical services teams are ready to provide lifesaving care to those in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and

**WHEREAS** EMS providers put the needs of their communities above their own as they respond to cries, treat injuries, and save lives in the hours of one's greatest need.

**WHEREAS** access to quality emergency care dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of those who experience sudden illness or injury; and

**WHEREAS** emergency medical services have grown to fill a gap by providing important, out of hospital care, including preventative medicine and follow-up care; and

**WHEREAS**, the emergency medical services system consists of paramedics, emergency medical technicians, emergency physicians, emergency nurses, firefighters, educators, administrators, and others; and

**WHEREAS**, the members of emergency medical services teams, engage in thousands of hours of specialized training and continuing education to enhance their lifesaving skills; and

**WHEREAS** it is appropriate to recognize the value and the accomplishments of emergency medical services providers by designating Emergency Medical Services Week; now

***THEREFORE, I Bryan A. King, Chairman of the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners, Rutherford County, North Carolina in recognition of this event do hereby proclaim the week of May 17-23, 2026, as **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK.*****

*With the theme, **Improving Outcomes, Together**, I encourage the community to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.*

*Adopted this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.*

#### **PROC 26-003**

#### **B. ID-26-4465 Older American's Month Proclamation**

Senior Center Program Manager Tonya Garrison told the Board that May is Older American's Month. A meeting in April 1963 between President John F. Kennedy and members of the National Council of Senior Citizens led to designating May as "Senior Citizens Month," the prelude to "Older Americans Month." The month is a time to celebrate the contributions seniors make to their communities. A proclamation declaring the month of May as Older American's Month was presented for the Board's consideration.

**Vice Chairman Toney moved to approve the proclamation. Commissioner Haulk seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.  
**Noes:** None

**PROCLAMATION  
OLDER AMERICANS' MONTH**

**WHEREAS**, Rutherford County is committed to ensuring that all residents can age with dignity, independence, and purpose in their homes and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, older adults are valued members of Rutherford County who contribute their knowledge, time, and experience through volunteering, civic engagement, and strengthening families across generations; and

**WHEREAS**, Rutherford County continues to experience growth in its older adult population, increasing the importance of accessible services, nutrition programs, transportation, and opportunities for social connection; and

**WHEREAS**, the **Rutherford County Senior Center** plays a vital role in supporting older adults through programs and services that promote health, independence, and community engagement; and

**WHEREAS**, promoting the health and well-being of older adults is essential to maintaining independence and enhancing quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, **Older Americans Month 2026**, with the theme "**Champion Your Health**," encourages older adults to take charge of their well-being through physical activity, proper nutrition, preventive care, and meaningful social engagement; and

**WHEREAS**, Rutherford County remains committed to fostering an age-friendly community where older adults are supported, respected, and empowered;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED**, that the **Rutherford County Board of Commissioners** hereby designates **May 2026** as "**Older Americans Month**" in Rutherford County and encourages all citizens to recognize and celebrate the contributions of older adults in our community.

**ADOPTED**, this 4th day of May, 2026.

**PROC 26-004**

**C. ID-26-4466 Appointments to Rutherford County Boards and Commissions**

A list of terms that will expire on June 30, 2026 on several Rutherford County boards/commissions was included in the agenda for the Board's information. These positions could be advertised, and applications could be accepted. Appointments could be made at a future meeting.

**Commissioner Benfield moved to advertise the vacancies, accept applications, and make appointments at a future meeting. Commissioner Haynes seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield,  
 Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.  
**Noes:** None

**V. New Business**

**A. ID-26-4476 Budget Amendments**

Finance Director/Deputy County Manager Paula Roach presented budget amendments for the Board's consideration.

**Commissioner Haulk moved to approve the budget amendments. Commissioner Haynes seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield,  
 Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.  
**Noes:** None

**Budget Amendments  
 May 4, 2026**

	Expense	Revenue
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>		
JCPC - Administration	\$ 1,648	
JCPC - Program Expenditures	\$ (1,648)	
*transfer program funds to administration		
Sparks Drive/Communications Bldg - HVAC Compressor	\$ 4,449	
Fund Balance Appropriated - HVAC Plan		\$ 4,449
*appropriate reserved funds for replacement parts		
Rutherford County Schools - Capital Outlay - Update Projects Request		
*Reallocate budgeted funds to new projects per attached email; projects have been reprioritized with recent grants received		
Library - Postage		
Passport Fees	\$ 1,400	
*appropriate fees for passport processing costs		\$ 1,400
College - Capital Improvements	\$ 210,000	
Contribution from College Capital Reserve		\$ 210,000
*Water Source Heat Pump System Replacement		
<b>COLLEGE CAPITAL RESERVE</b>		

	Expense	Revenue
Transfer to General Fund	\$ 210,000	
Reserved for Critical Education Projects - College	\$ (210,000)	
*Water Source Heat Pump System Replacement		
<b>GRANT FUND</b>		
STAR Program Expenses	\$ 3,395	
STAR Donations		\$ 3,395
*donations received for Sheriff STAR Program		
Sheriff - Equipment Grant - NC OSBM	\$ 34,772	
Interest Earnings		\$ 34,772
*appropriate project interest earnings to date		

**B. ID-26-4473 Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Funding Allocation for Fiscal Year 2026-2027**

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Chairman Paul Holden presented the recommended Juvenile Crime Prevention Council funding for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

**Commissioner Haynes moved to approve the recommendations as presented. Commissioner Haulk seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

- Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.  
**Noes:** None

Program Provider	DPS-JCPC Funding	Local In-Kind	Total	% Non DPS-JCPC Program Revenues
JCPC Admin	\$6,650		\$6,650	
Kids at Work Rutherford Aspire Youth & Family	\$62,940	\$15,722	\$78,662	20%
Project Challenge	\$76,056	\$15,211	\$91,267	17%
Psychological Services – Rutherford Repay	\$10,002	\$2,000	\$12,002	17%
Just Girls – Repay	\$34,793	\$6,959	\$41,752	17%
R.I.S.E. – Repay	\$34,793	\$6,959	\$41,752	17/5
Totals	\$225,234	\$46,851	\$272,085	17%

**C. ID-26-4478 Partners Health Maintenance of Effort Runds Recommendation**

Dr. Paul Holden, Regional Director of Community Operations for Partners Health Management requested that the following programs be funded from the \$102,168 in Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds in the 2026-2027 approved budget.

SOG Collaborative Expenses	\$ 2,000
Consumer Reserves – IDD & MHSU	\$ 2,000
Housing Reserves - various providers	\$ 5,000.00
Preferred Choice Healthcare	\$ 58,168.00
Rutherford DSS- Treatment & Placement Reserve Funds	\$ 20,000.00
United Way- Grant Writing Assistance	\$ 10,000.00
Health Council-Pantry-Equipment Support-Food Supplies	\$ 5,000.00

Total \$ 102,168.00

**Commissioner Benfield moved to approve the funding request. Commissioner Haynes seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.

**Noes:** None

**D. ID-26-4452 Multi-Year Agreement with Lexis Nexis for the County Attorney**

Information Technology Director Jai Doherty told the Board that LexisNexis is a leading global data, analytics, and technology company that provides computer-assisted legal research (Lexis) and news/business information (Nexis). It serves professionals in legal, risk management, corporate, government, and academic sectors by aggregating billions of searchable documents to aid in decision-making, compliance, and due diligence.

A multi-year contract with LexisNexis was presented for the Board's consideration.

**Commissioner Benfield moved to approve a contract with Lexis Nexis negotiated by the Interim County Manager and the County Attorney and authorize the Interim County Manager, Finance Officer, Clerk to the Board, and other County officials to sign and execute all documents in support of this action. Vice Chairman Toney seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.

**Noes:** None

**E. ID-26-4453 Multi-year Agreement with CivicPlus (NextRequest) for the Legal Department**

Director Doherty also presented a multi-year agreement with CivicPlus (NextRequest) for the Legal Department. CivicPlus NextRequest is a web-based, all-in-one public records management platform designed to help local governments streamline FOIA and public records requests from submission to fulfillment. It allows residents to submit requests online, while providing staff with tools for tracking, managing, and automating workflows for improved transparency.

**Commissioner Haynes moved to approve a contract with CivicPlus (NextRequest) negotiated by the County Manager and the County Attorney and authorize the County Manager, Finance Officer, Clerk to the Board, and other County officials to sign and execute all documents in support of this action. Commissioner Benfield seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.

**Noes:** None

**F. ID-26-4470 Resolution Awarding Major Andy Greenway's Side Arm and Badge**

Sheriff Aaron Ellenburg requested that the Board approve a resolution in accordance with G.S. 20-187.2 awarding Major Andy Greenway's service side arm and badge to him for the sum of \$1.00. Major Greenway began his law enforcement career in 1996. He has served with the Rutherford County Sheriff's Department since November of 2018 as a School Resource Officer, a Sergeant, a Captain, and as Major. Major Greenway has served with both honor and integrity in all positions held. He will retire effective June 1, 2026.

**Commissioner Benfield moved to approve the resolution. Commissioner Haulk seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.

**Noes:** None

**Resolution Acknowledging the Service of Major Andy Greenway and Awarding His Service Side Arm and Badge to Him**

**WHEREAS**, Major Andy Greenway has served in law enforcement in Rutherford County and surrounding counties from January 1996 to June 1, 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, Major Greenway served honorably and with integrity in his positions as a Corrections Officer with the North Carolina Department of Corrections, as a patrol officer with the Alexander Millers Police Department and the Shelby Police Department, served with the Spindale Police Department in several capacities including as a Chief of Police, as a Chief deputy with Polk County Sheriff's Office, as Lieutenant with Lake Lure Police Department, as a Deputy Sheriff, a School Resource Officer, a Sergeant, a Captain, and as Major with the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that Board of Commissioners of the the County of Rutherford, in accordance with NC General Statute 20-187.2, do hereby award Major Greenway his service side arm (Sig Sauer Model 365 X Macro Tac Ops Serial Number 66G220532) and badge in exchange for the consideration of \$1.00.

Approved this the 4th day of May, 2026.

**RES 26-011**

Chief Greenway also requested that Corporal Mike Messer be awarded his duty weapon and badge upon his retirement. Corporal Messer has served in the Sheriff's Office's as a sworn a Deputy Sheriff, Corporal and Sergeant assigned to the Patrol Division, and as a Corporal with the Court Security Detail. Corporal Messer also has prior service with the Spindale Police Department, the Marion Police Department and the Polk County Sheriff's Office

Corporal Messer began his career with the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office in June of 1996. Corporal Messer is retiring June 1, 2026. Corporal Messer has served honorably and with integrity in all the positions he held.

Corporal Messer's assigned duty weapon is a Glock Model 45 Serial Number CECA704.

**Commissioner Benfield moved to award Corporal Messer his assigned duty weapon and his badge in exchange for \$1.00. Commissioner Haynes seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.

**Noes:** None

**G. ID-26-4463 Budget Presentation for 2026-2027**

Chairman/Interim County Manager Bryan King presented the recommended 2026-2027 Rutherford County budget which he stated was focused on stability and preparation. Key factors impacting decisions the 2026 - 2027 budget included –

- Continued inflation and rising operational costs
- Uncertainty in sales tax, property tax, and vehicle tax collections
- Labor market pressures impacting recruitment and retention
- Increases in state retirement, health insurance, and mandated program costs
- Ongoing and future capital facility and infrastructure needs
- Economic impacts from recent events (e.g., storms, regional/national economic trends)
- Increased demand for public safety, education, and human services

There are also other factors to consider such as roof replacements, viper radios, law enforcement vehicles, ambulance replacements, information technology upgrades, Medicaid costs, ICC Facilities Condition Assessment Program (FCAP), critical safety upgrades, and 5% matching funds for Rutherford County Schools to apply towards a Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund (NBPSCF) Grant. In addition, there is the upcoming revaluation and the recommended full measure and list revaluation in 2031.

The County provides support for 30 departments, operations across 76 facilities, and a workforce of more than 700 employees. These services span over 460,000 square feet, across approximately 800 acres, in addition to the support provided to RCS and ICC. This year's budget places a stronger emphasis on preparing for the needs, primarily known as the capital needs that will occur over the next three to five years. There are significant capital improvement requirements, and the budget proposal highlights the development of a structured capital investment plan to begin meeting those known needs.

The budget recognizes the importance of supporting improvement plans, within capacity, for local schools, Isothermal Community College, and County assets. A key focus is infrastructure replacement, which represents the largest portion of identified needs. As a result, careful consideration of fund balance will be necessary to responsibly address these priorities. The Capital Investment Plan also includes the rising cost of vehicles and adequately completing active construction projects such as the detention facility and addition of the fourth courtroom.

The budget recommended investing portions of the non-restricted fund balance to prepare for known future needs into a Capital Investment Plan. This CIP will address the known needs facing Rutherford County over the next three to five years. Preparing for those needs now will help stabilize the process of implementation to address these needs in future years. The remaining unrestricted fund balance allows the county to maintain a reserve to keep the credit rating high and the ability to face an emergency. County staff will work with DEC Associates to present a fund balance policy later this year to support the Capital Investment Plan. Funds will be transferred from the General Fund to a new Capital Investment Plan Fund to support these projects.

The Capital Investment Plan Fund includes:

- Viper Radios \$950,000
- Law Enforcement Vehicles \$2,860,000
- Public Service Vehicles \$2,954,500
- IT Hardware and Software \$910,000
- Elections Equipment \$275,000
- Other County Vehicles and Equipment \$1,661,616
- RCS Needs-Based Public-School Capital Fund (NBPSCF) Grant Match \$3,100,000
- ICC Facilities Condition Assessment Program (FCAP) Recommendations \$3,100,000
- County Facilities and Buildings \$5,599,100
- Reserves for Full Measure and List Revaluation for 2031 \$1,700,000

It is a recommendation that the Board of Commissioners develop a Rutherford County Fund Balance policy to be reviewed and approved each year by the Board.

It is important to note that despite past effort to operate the Rutherford County Solid Waste Department as an enterprise system, the recommendation moving forward is recognizing that Solid Waste is part of the county's essential services -necessary to protect public health, maintain environmental standards, and ensure dependable service countywide - and it is recommended to be supported as a County Department instead of a stand-alone enterprise to ensure dependable service countywide.

The Solid Waste Operations have faced multiple challenges during recent years, which may have an impact on the Solid Waste future revenue projections and expenditures. Due to state and national economic trends and legislative burdens placed on the processing of certain waste such as electronics, textiles, metal, white goods, tires, oil and recycling, these program revenues have been unstable at times and contractor/subcontractor costs have increased along with the costs of fuel and employee benefits. It is extremely difficult to maintain operations as an enterprise fund with the continued rising costs. Leveraging Solid Waste within the General Fund would allow other funding opportunities to support the department.

Solid Waste fees are recommended to be set as follows: MSW Tipping Fees \$80/ton, C&D Tipping Fees \$70/ton, and Brush Tipping Fees \$45/ton. It is also recommended to replace the Solid Waste Household Fee, Solid Waste Homestead Fee, and the Recycling Availability Fee and implement a consolidated Solid Waste and Recycling Availability Fee at \$55/improved property to support operations and disposal costs.

For FY2026-2027, the budget recommends a total of \$4,737,629 to be allocated for Isothermal Community College with \$3,597,353 going to operations, \$700,000 to capital outlay, and \$440,276 for debt service. This reflects a 10.246% increase in operations.

For FY2026-2027, an appropriation of \$27,346,014 is recommended to Rutherford County Schools with \$17,645,195 for general operations, and \$1,554,057 for teacher supplements - for a subtotal of \$19,199,252 for current expense - and \$1,121,000 to general capital outlay. Including sales tax set aside for debt service on school capital of \$7,025,672, the total county appropriation supporting the Rutherford County School System during FY2026-2027 is recommended at \$27,346,014. This is a 4.52% increase over current year's appropriation for operations. The total county appropriations to supplement education capital outlay over and above the required sales tax is recommended at \$1,718,150.

For Fiscal Year 2026-2027, this budget recommends a total General Fund Budget of \$93,447,130 an increase of 6.654% over the current fiscal year general fund budget. Total requests for the General Fund were \$109,225,378 but was reduced to \$93,447,130 as previously stated. The total budget for all funds is recommended at \$121,211,412,

The current tax rate of 45.4 cents per every \$100 of value is recommended in the budget while recommending approximately \$10M dollars of fund balance to bridge the gap in the 2026-2027 budget. It is expected that some of these monies will return to the general fund due to conservative revenue estimates and county department heads that are great stewards of their budgets and generally return unspent funds to the general fund. The County is also able to retain the \$4.6 million of Helene Cash Flow Loan proceeds that will be held by the county until June 2030 at which time the principal will be due and payable to the State Treasurer's Office but the interest earned while held is not restricted nor payable to the State.

The recommended budget at the current 45.4 cents will sustain operations, increase support for public safety, education, and maintain service levels across departments. Public Safety currently makes up approximately 29.6% of the budget, education makes up about 26.8%, and Human Services makes up about 21.5%. In this proposed FY2026-2027 budget. Public Safety currently makes up approximately 30.06% of our budget, education increases to 25.59% and Human Services makes up about 22.74%. However, Human Services percentage is a bit misleading, as approximately 60.99% of the tax dollars

used to support DSS included within the Human Services category is reimbursed through State, Federal and grant sources leaving approximately 39.01% to be covered by county dollars.

Staff will work with the Financial Advisor to establish the Capital Investment Plan Fund which will be created in the upcoming Budget Ordinance by setting aside the following:

- \$1.7 million for the upcoming 2031 Revaluation which needs to be a full measure and list. The last full measure and list revaluation was completed with the 2019 Revaluation.
- \$9.3 million for Vehicles and Equipment including viper radios and election equipment
- \$11.8 million for Capital Facilities - \$5.6 million for County needs and \$3.1 million each for the schools and college

**Vice Chairman Toney made a motion to approve June 1, 2026 as the date for a public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget; approve May 11, May 18 and May 21, 2026 as dates for budget workshops; and June 4, 2026 as a date for the budget adoption. Commissioner Benfield seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes, and Commissioner Haulk.

**Noes:** None

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## **VI. Adjournment**

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**At 7:24 P.M. Vice Chairman Toney made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Benfield seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was:**

**Ayes:** Commissioner King, Commissioner Toney, Commissioner Benfield, Commissioner Haynes and Commissioner Haulk.

**Noes:** None

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Chairman, Board of Commissioners

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Vice Chairman, Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Clerk, Board of Commissioners