

**MINUTES
BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PRE-AGENDA MEETING**

The Burke County Board of Commissioners held a pre-agenda meeting on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. in the County Board Room, Burke Services Building, 110 N. Green Street in Morganton, N.C. The meeting was streamed live on the County's YouTube channel, BurkeCountyNC, and it was broadcast on the local cable systems later. The agenda, in its entirety, was posted to the County's website, www.burkenc.org, several days prior to the meeting as usual. Both Burke County and the state of North Carolina had previously declared a state of emergency which was ongoing as of this date due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Those present were:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Scott Mulwee, Chairman
Johnnie W. Carswell, Vice Chairman
Wayne F. Abele, Sr.
Jeffrey C. Brittain
Maynard M. Taylor

STAFF PRESENT: Bryan Steen, County Manager
Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director
J.R. Simpson, II, County Attorney
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mulwee called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: To approve the agenda as amended: remove Decision Item No. 1 (BOC / BDI - Homes for Hope Housing Project) and add a presentation item to swear-in the new Tax Administrator.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Maynard M. Taylor, Commissioner
AYES:	Scott Mulwee, Johnnie W. Carswell, Wayne F. Abele, Sr., Jeffrey C. Brittain and Maynard M. Taylor

PRESENTATIONS

FINANCE – SWEARING IN OF THE NEW TAX ADMINISTRATOR

For ceremonial and publicity purposes, Clerk Draughn swore in John Bridgers as the new Tax Administrator. He was officially sworn-in the day before by Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director and Notary Public. Mr. Bridgers said he appreciates the opportunity to come to Burke County and he commended the Tax Office staff.

RESULT:	NO ACTION TAKEN.
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AS - PETS OF THE MONTH

Clerk Draughn, filling in for Kaitlin Settlemyre, Animal Services Director, said Animal Services staff will present a dog and a cat in need of their "forever" homes at the regular meeting.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

NCGS - PRESENTATION OF THE ORDER OF THE LONG LEAF PINE AWARD TO BILL ALLMAN

Clerk Draughn presented information regarding the presentation of the Order of the Long Leaf Pine award to Bill Allman as follows:

William "Bill" Allman was nominated and received the prestigious "The Order of the Long Leaf Pine" award from the Governor's office. N.C. Representative Hugh Blackwell will officially present the award to Mr. Allman at the regular meeting. Mr. Allman, in addition to his military service in the U.S. Army and champion of local youth sports, he served as Chairman of the Burke County Board of Health for almost two decades and as a trustee of the Western Piedmont Community College for twelve years.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

LJAWNS - LAKE JAMES LITTER CLEAN-UP REPORT

Clerk Draughn reported at the regular meeting, Mr. Howard Morgan, Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society, will present a report on the Lake James clean-up effort held on March 19, 2022.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Clerk Draughn responded to a question from Commissioner Taylor regarding the number of attendees for this item. Commissioner Abele commended the Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society for their work in cleaning up Lake James. A brief discussion ensued regarding litter.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMM. DEV. - ZONING MAP AMENDMENT ZMA 2022-02 & PUBLIC HEARING - 6:00 P.M.

Alan Glines, Deputy County Manager/Planning Director, presented information regarding ZMA 2022-02 as follows:

REQUEST

Burke County has received a rezoning application from Brian Arrowood and Scott Blake of Breckenridge Homes, Inc. to rezone two parcels of land totaling 12.11-acres. The request is to rezone the two properties from its current zoning of Rural Mixed-Use (R-MU) to the Residential Two (R-2) zoning district.

BACKGROUND AND SITE ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting the rezoning in order to develop a residential subdivision. The parcels are described as follows:

- The parcels are further identified in county records as Parcel 1 (REID# 59896 and Parcel 2 REID# 54460).
- The parcels are vacant; except for an old barn type structure on Parcel 2. That parcel has an address of 4962 Dentons Chapel Rd., Morganton, NC.
- The parcels are located within the Silver Creek Township and the Brendletown Fire District of Burke County. The parcels are not located within a WS-IV PA Water Supply Watershed. Records indicate that the properties can be served by public water and private onsite septic.
- Both parcels have frontage on Dentons Chapel Rd. (SR# 1115). The rear property lines of Parcel 1 run along Clear Creek. The rear portion of Parcel 1 is also within a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) on (*see Flood Map*). The parcels are not located within any Overlay District.

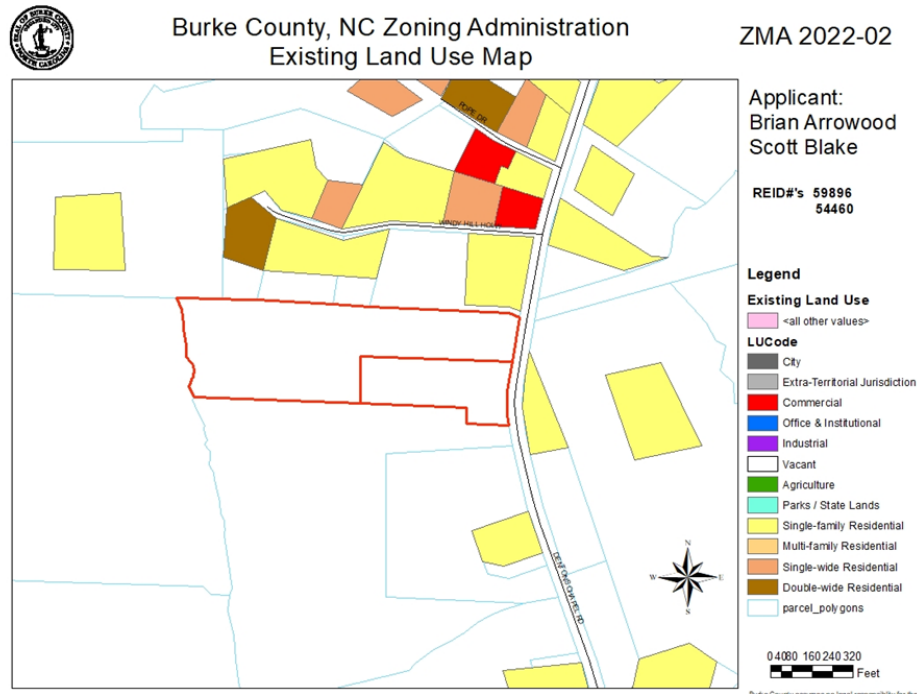
SURROUNDING AREA

The subject parcels are located approximately four (4) miles from the Morganton jurisdictional limits. This area transitions from Residential (R-1, R-2, R-3) zoning to the Rural Mixed-Use zoning. Much of the land in the area are large vacant tracts. There are a number of major subdivisions in both the Residential and Rural Mixed-Use districts. The majority of these subdivisions and businesses are located along US 64. Scattered throughout the area as well, are several properties zoned General Business (G-B).

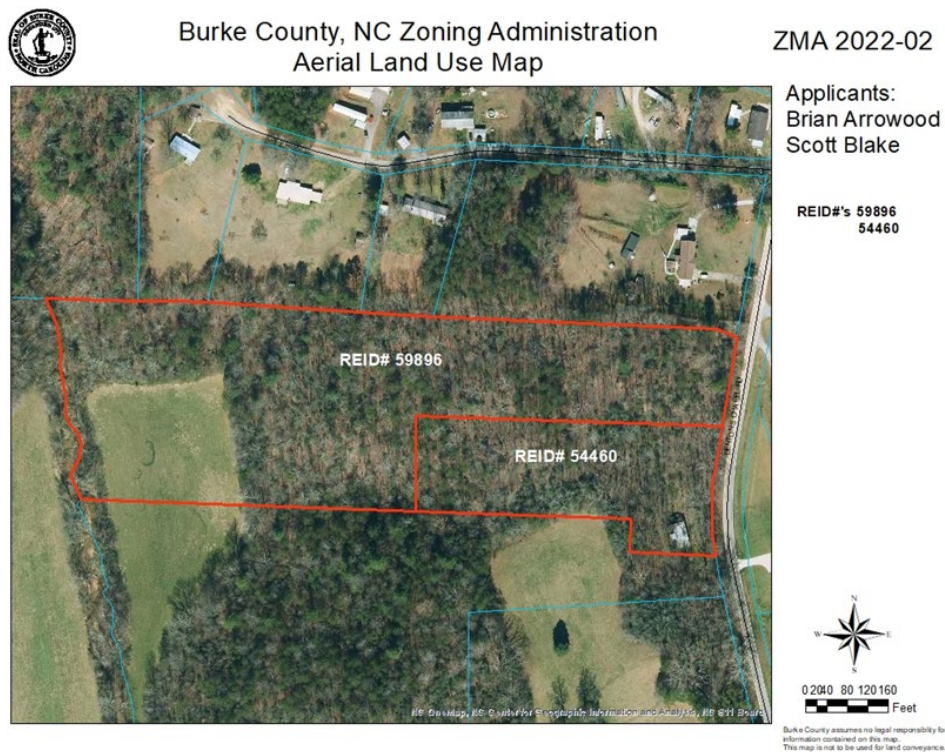
Existing Zoning and Land Uses within the Surrounding Area		
	Current Zoning	Existing Land Uses
North	Rural Mixed-Use	Scattered Residences / Residential Subdivision
South	Rural Mixed-Use	Vacant Land / Scattered Residences
East	R-MU, R-3, R-2	Vacant Land / Scattered Residences / Subdivision
West	Rural Mixed-Use	Vacant Land / Scattered Residences / Subdivision

The Existing Land Use Table (above) and the Existing Land Use Map (Below) provide information concerning the existing land uses within the surrounding area.

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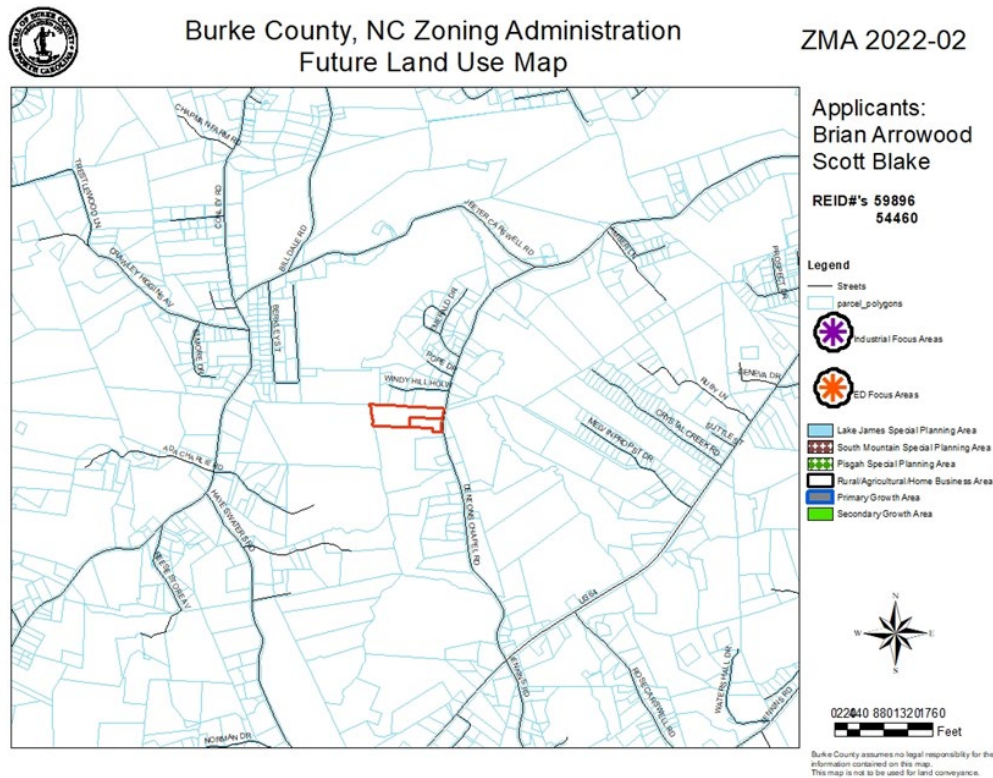
The Aerial Land Use Map (below) shows the amount of vacant land in the area, including the subject parcels. Directly to the north is the Hickory-Hill Subdivision. Further to the north is the Pine Ridge Subdivision. Both of these subdivisions are zoned R-MU. To the east is the South Mt. Estates Subdivision within R-3 zoning. Further to the east is the Crystal Creek Estates subdivision which is zoned R-2. This is the closest R-2 zoning to the subject parcels.



CONFORMITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The current land use plan for Burke County is the 2016-2030 Blueprint Burke Strategic Land Use Plan. The subject parcel is located in the Rural/Agricultural Area (see map below). This designation is given to all areas of the county which are not designated as Primary Growth or Secondary Growth Areas. These areas are typically considered rural in nature and may allow a variety of land uses. The focus of this designation is the development of additional needed housing.

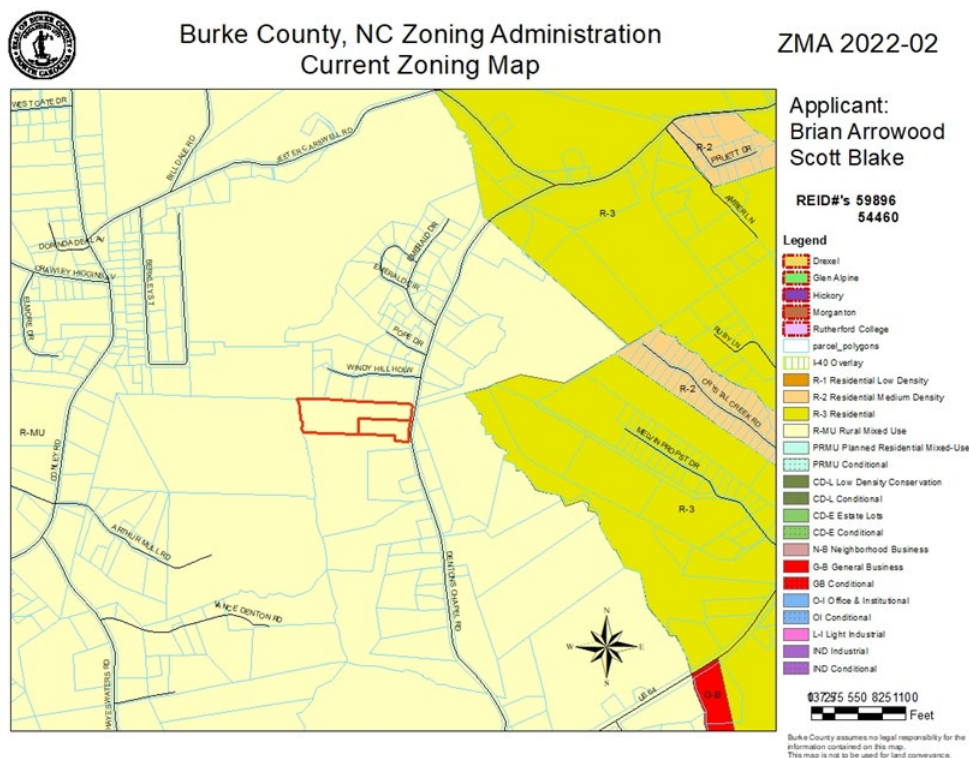
As mentioned earlier, public water is available to this area. For certain types of development, the land use ordinances require the owner/developer to extend public water to the property. There is no public sewer in this area, therefore many non-residential and multi-family developments would not be feasible. Residential development is one of the more feasible uses for this land.



CONFORMITY WITH THE BURKE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE

The current Zoning Map (below) shows the current zoning for the subject parcel and surrounding area. As stated earlier, the "current" zoning district for this parcel is Rural Mixed-Use (R-MU) which allows for a wide range of residential and commercial activities. If the parcel was rezoned to the Residential Two (R-2) district, the allowed uses would primarily be single-family detached, modular homes, and Class A manufactured homes. A Class A manufactured home is a multi-section home on a masonry foundation with vinyl siding and a pitched roof with shingles. Multi-family development would be allowed as a Special Use if approved by the Burke County Board of Adjustment, but as mentioned earlier, would require access to public sewer, which is not available in this area.

As mentioned earlier, the subject parcels front on Dentons Chapel Rd. (SR# 1115). Dentons Chapel Road is a two-lane secondary road and has a posted speed limit of 45 MPH. Secondary roads are roads maintained by the Department of Transportation that do not carry 'NC' or 'US' numbers and are outside the boundary of any incorporated municipality. Any proposed development other than one-family or two-family dwelling units would require an NCDOT Driveway Permit.



STAFF COMMENTS

In staff's opinion, rezoning the two parcels to the Residential-Two zoning district would be zoning to a much more restrictive district. The R-2 district would mainly allow certain types of residential development, whereas the current Rural Mixed-Use district allows all forms of residential uses and many forms of non-residential/ commercial uses as well. Burke County has an urgent need for housing. The R-2 district could enhance the overall character of the area, especially if a new single-family home subdivision were to be developed as the applicant intends. The main benefit to the change to R-2 is the reduced lot size requirement. All development regulations would still apply, including approved septic system requirements.

Currently, the land is undeveloped. The single-family home development would add to the needed housing stock within Burke County and increase the county's tax base. Alternatively, if/when the property is ever developed as a commercial use, it potentially could have a negative impact on the surrounding residential development. The R-MU district allows everything from manufacturing and processing facilities to junk yards and landfills. A list of allowed uses for both districts is provided in the packet.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Board met on February 24, 2022, to hear this request. Staff presented their report and then the applicant gave their presentation. Mr. Blake explained that he is a builder/developer seeking to rezone the property for cost effectiveness. His intention is to build affordable homes starting in the \$300,000. Mr. Blake intends to use the flood prone area for common open space, walking trails, soccer fields etc.

The Board then opened the floor to public comment. There were eight (8) people who spoke. Each of the speakers were opposed to the rezoning because of the proposed subdivision that was planned. The main concerns expressed were increased traffic on the two-lane road, possible septic contamination of existing wells, and potential water runoff from the development. One person was concerned with crime with more people in the area.

The Chairperson thanked them for their comments and participation and then the Board members asked the applicant and staff several questions. Once the questions were answered, the Chairperson asked for a motion on the rezoning request. A motion to "deny" the rezoning application was made. That motion was seconded. The motion was put to the full board and the motion carried by a vote of 4/2. The Planning Board recommended denial of rezoning request 2022-02.

To assist the Board in their decision, staff has provided the following considerations:

- Is there a public need for additional land to be zoned to the requested classification?
- What is the impact on public services, facilities, infrastructure, fire and safety, and topography?
- What are the nearby development/zoning patterns?
- Consider the full range of uses allowed by the proposed district versus the uses allowed within the current zoning district.
- Is the rezoning request compatible with the character of the surrounding area and suitable with the property for certain use?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please refer to the application, driving directions, photos, and map(s) for more information.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Mr. Glines responded to questions from Commissioner Taylor regarding lot size and acreage. In response to another question from Commissioner Taylor regarding property restrictions, Mr. Glines said there are private agreements that would stay with the land and noted that the County is not responsible for enforcing private restrictions. Mr. Glines said the County would cover its codes and ordinances, not private agreements. Commissioner Taylor asked what recourse a neighbor would have if they wanted to further resist this rezoning request. Mr. Glines said a neighbor could have purchased the property and they can also voice their concerns to the Board. Discussion ensued and Mr. Glines responded to additional questions from Commissioner Taylor.

Mr. Glines responded to a question from Vice Chairman Carswell regarding the Planning Board's vote on this item.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

CONSENT AGENDA

BOC - PROCLAMATION DECLARING APRIL 16-30, 2022, AS SPRING LITTER SWEEP

Vice Chairman Carswell presented a proclamation declaring April 16 - April 30, 2022, as "Spring Litter Sweep" in Burke County.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

CLERK - APPOINTMENTS TO THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Clerk Draughn reported that the appointment of Jonathan Carter to Seat No. 4 (Valdese/Rutherford College) on the Parks & Recreation Commission is requested to replace Doug Knight who retired from the Valdese Recreation Department to complete an unexpired term ending March 31, 2023. The appointment of Tabbatha Hoilman to Seat No. 5 (George Hildebrand) is requested to fill a vacancy with a term ending March 31, 2024. The appointment of Ricky Barnes to Seat No. 6 (Hildebran /Icard) is requested to fill a vacancy with a term ending March 31, 2023.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Taylor commended the candidates.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

CLERK - REMOVAL FROM NURSING HOME / ADULT CARE CAC

Clerk Draughn reported due to a resignation, the Regional Ombudsman, Christina Franklin, requests the removal of Deborah Cooper from the Adult Care / Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee, Seat No. 1.

Adult Care & Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee				
13-Members				
1-Year & 3-Year Terms				
General Statute: GS 131 D				
Seat No.	Position	Name-Address		Term
1	At-Large	Deborah Cooper	A	5/29/2018
		P.O. Box 385	R	11/19/2019
		Morganton NC 28655	TE	5/31/2022

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Vice Chairman

Carswell asked if the committee has started going back into the nursing homes. Clerk Draughn said no and noted that Christina Franklin, Regional Ombudsman, is working on a new training program that is the result of new legislation. A brief discussion ensued.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

COUNTY MANAGER - PROCLAMATION DECLARING MAY 5, 2022, AS NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Information from the agenda packet:

The National Day of Prayer tradition predates the founding of the United States of America, evidence by the Continental Congress' proclamation in 1775 setting aside a day of prayer. In 1952, Congress established an annual day of prayer and, in 1988, that law was amended, designating the National Day of Prayer as the first Thursday in May. Though the National Day of Prayer focuses most of its efforts promoting the annual day of prayer, we realize that true life-altering, world-changing prayer cannot happen in a single day. It must become a discipline. The theme for the 2022 National Day of Prayer is "Exalt the Lord who has Established Us". The Board is requested to adopt a proclamation.

County Manager Steen said this is an item the Board has adopted for several years, and the 2022 proclamation is before the Board for their consideration. Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Taylor commended the proclamation and discussion ensued regarding distributing the proclamation to every church in Burke County. Clerk Draughn commented on the large number of churches in the county and limited resources. Instead, she offered to send the proclamation to her pastor email distribution list and ask them to distribute it with their congregations and local associations, which was acceptable to the Board.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

CM - TERMINATION OF DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH GLAMPING LAKE JAMES, LLC

County Manager Steen presented information regarding the termination of the development agreement with Glamping Lake James, LLC as follows:

The Board approved a development and lease agreement with Isaac Hoff of Glamping Lake James, LLC, in May of 2021 to develop "glamping structures" in a portion of the Fonta Flora County Park at Lake James. The project has not proceeded as originally contemplated. Staff believes it is in the County's best interest to terminate the development agreement and Mr. Hoff agrees. He has requested that the County refund his lease payments to date totaling \$3,753 and reimburse him the sum of \$6,545 for the cost of his site plan. Staff is willing to reimburse lease payments to date, but not reimburse any amounts expended in preparation of a site plan. A termination agreement to be signed by both parties will be necessary to protect both parties from future liability. The budgetary effect is a reduction of rental income anticipated under the agreement in the

amount of \$5,000 for FY 21-22.

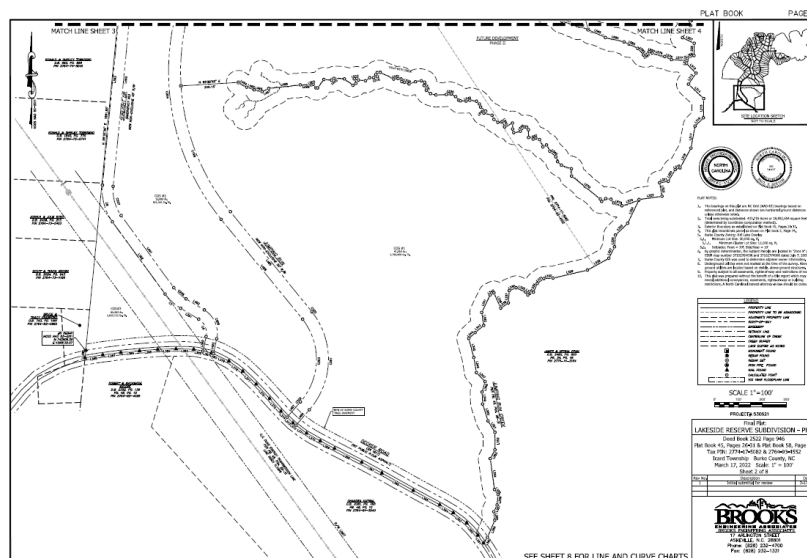
Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Taylor asked why Glamping Lake James, LLC (GLJ) was unable to proceed with the agreement. County Manager Steen said the original width of the road was deemed by the Fire Marshal's office to be inconsistent with the minimum requirements of the state fire code. This would increase the project cost for GLJ which they were not agreeable to. He continued, they told GLJ that the County cannot alter state fire code, which was one of the problems that ultimately led to the project not advancing. Commissioner Taylor asked if the COVID-19 pandemic was a cause of the termination of the agreement. County Manager Steen said no, it was primarily the cost of infrastructure and the County's development requirements. County Manager Steen responded to additional questions from Commissioner Taylor.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

COM. DEV. - ACCEPT THE JUMPING RUN TRAIL EASEMENT

Shane Prisby, Community Development Operations Manager, reported the Community Development Department has been working with the developers of the Jumping Run subdivision in eastern Burke County on a trail easement for the Burke River Trail. The Burke River Trail is a proposed trail to connect the communities in eastern Burke from Morganton to the Hickory Airport and beyond. This project is in the early planning stages with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments as the point agency for the project. While construction is likely years away, there is an opportunity to secure a much-needed trail easement to construct the trail in the future and the County would have the option to transfer the trail easement to another entity to construct/operate the trail in the future.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Vice Chairman Carswell asked what is the County's total participation in the project. Mr. Prisby said at this point, it is up to the County to determine our level of participation, noting that this project is still in the preliminary phases. Chairman Mulwee said he does not see a downside to this item. Mr. Prisby agreed.



RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

GS - ACCEPTANCE OF RECYCLING GRANT TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY - EAST BURKE CONVENIENCE SITE

Information from the agenda packet:

General Services was awarded a CWRAR (Community Waste Reduction and Recycling) \$30,000 grant from the NC Department of Environmental Quality for the new East Burke Convenience Site on March 30, 2022. The local match is \$14,230. The grant must be accepted by April 15th. To comply with the grant requirements, the County Manager will officially accept the funding and the Board is asked to ratify the acceptance.

ITEM	State Grant Award	Applicant Cash Match	Project Total
4 Cubic Yard Stationary Compactor			\$22,354
One [1] Forty [40] cubic yard Standard Octagon Receiver Container			\$9,876
Disconnect Boxes for Connection / 3-Phase Electrical hook-up			\$5,000
12' x 50' Concrete Pad Installation			\$4,000
Educational materials such as signs, brochures, and web site data.			\$2,000.00
Total Amount	\$30,000	\$14,230	\$44,230

Budgetary Effect: \$30,000 in new monies. Funding is not included in the FY21-22 budget for required match; therefore, an appropriation of \$14,230 is necessary for this grant to move forward.

Mark Delehant, General Services Director, said he was notified last Wednesday afternoon that Burke County received a grant he applied for in February. The purpose of this grant is to make recycling more user friendly for the citizens and less expensive for the local government providing that service. He said most of the Commissioners have visited the convenience sites and have seen the two (2) compactors used for collecting household waste. He continued, the plan is to include a third compactor for "Single Stream Recycling" allowing citizens to combine their mixed paper, plastic, aluminum, and tin cans rather than sorting it. Additionally, they will be hauling compacted cans and bottles to the recycling facility in Conover rather than uncrushed cans and bottles. This should result in heavier loads but fewer trips.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Mr. Delehant responded to comments from Commissioner Taylor regarding fluorescent light bulb recycling.

County Manager Steen commented on how the compactor will increase the efficiency of trash hauling, reduce truck maintenance, reduce labor and fuel costs, and noted that this is a tremendous benefit to the citizens. A brief discussion ensued regarding fluorescent light bulb recycling and Mr. Delehant said Burke County is required to recycle fluorescent light bulbs that they generate as an entity, not recycling for the public. He said he will be requesting a bulb crusher for use at the landfill in the upcoming budget. Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, said the draft motion will need to be amended to include the required match from General Fund, Fund Balance, because it was not originally included in the budget. Mr. Delehant said he planned to include the local match in the FY 22-23 budget. A general discussion ensued. Ms. Pierce reiterated the need to amend the motion to include an appropriation of fund balance in the motion for pre-auditing purposes.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.
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HEALTH - 2021 STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT

The Health Department is required to present to stakeholders the progress on the Community Health Needs Assessment and this is noted in the 2021 State of the County Health Report. This report was presented by Chae Moore, Health Education Supervisor as follows:

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2021 BURKE COUNTY STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT

The 2021 State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report is a summary of the current health status of Burke County. This report is given in the years between Community Health Assessments (CHA). The Community Health Assessment gives a more in depth analysis of the county's health. The most recent Burke County CHA, identified substance use disorder, heart disease and stroke and COPD as the focal health priorities. This report gives a snapshot of the comprehensive overview on changes in trends related to these health priorities, updates on community initiatives, and any new emerging trends occurring in Burke County.

Demographic Snapshot

**Estimated Total Number Living in
Burke County**

90,485

(County Health Rankings 2019)



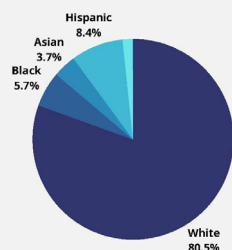
Life Expectancy
76.7 years

Gender Distribution

Men: 50.0% Women: 49.9%



Race/Ethnicity



Population by Age

Under 5 years: **4.7%**

Under 18 years: **18.9%**

18 years and older: **81.1%**

65 years and over: **19.7%**

Households with Food Stamp/SNAP Benefits in the past 12 months

In 2021, there were **14,146** individual recipients receiving Food Stamp/SNAP benefits.



Burke County Median Household Income has increased by \$6,507 since 2017.

\$47,361

NORTH CAROLINA: \$57,341

Poverty in Burke County



- In 2019, an estimated **21%** of people in Burke live in poverty.
- 26.7% are under the age of 18
- 18.3% are 18-64
- 9.2% are 65 years and older

Education Attainment in Burke County



- High School or equivalent : 31.4 %
- Some college, no degree: 22.0%
- Associate's degree: 11.8%
- Bachelor's degree: 10.6%
- Graduate/professional degree: 5.8%

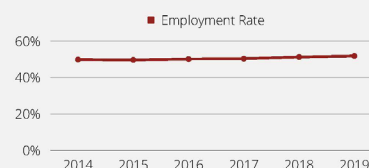
Reference: United States Census Bureau - <https://data.census.gov/>

Population without health insurance



14% under the age 65 are without health insurance. (2019)

Employment Rate in Burke is **53.2%**



Mortality and morbidity in Burke County has not changed much over the years. However, cancer as cause of death has moved into the top leading cause over diseases of heart.

2019 Leading Causes of Death in Burke County

Rank	Cause	Number	%
1	Cancer	238	22.2
2	Disease of heart	217	20.3
3	Chronic lower respiratory disease	89	8.3
4	Cerebrovascular diseases	62	5.8
5	All other unintentional injuries	47	4.4
6	Diabetes mellitus	30	2.8
7	Alzheimer's disease	27	2.5
8	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis	21	2.0
9	Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis	18	1.7
	Influenza and pneumonia	18	1.7
	Septicemia	18	1.7
	All other causes (residual)	285	26.6
	Total Deaths--All Causes	1070	100.0

Reference: State Center for Health Statistics, NC

Burke County's Fight Against Hepatitis A



From April 2018 to May 2021, 982 hepatitis A cases were confirmed in NC with 72 total cases reported in Burke County. Burke County had the highest rate of person to person transmission in the entire state. Burke County Health Department and Morganton Department of Public Safety developed a partnership to engage the community as a team to prevent further transmission of hep A via person to person. Morganton Department of With help from other local partners such as, Burke County United Way and the Community Foundation of Burke County; hygiene bags and monetary donations were given to aide in this work. The hepatitis A prevention hygiene kits, vaccinations, and education for persons at greatest risk for hepatitis A infection, were the main resources used to help prioritize this outbreak. After community outreach interventions and education, Burke County almost simultaneously began to see a drop in the amount of hepatitis A transmission rates. In September 2021, Burke dropped to a rate 29.7 cases per 100,000 (placing us 6th in the state) and then in January 2022, Burke dropped even further to 2.3 cases per 100,000 (placing us 18th in the state).



Pictured: Staff from United Way, Burke County Health Department, and Morganton Department of Public Safety helped assemble hygiene bags in an effort to help tackle the Hepatitis A outbreak in Burke.

Reference: https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/diseases/hep_a.html

COVID-19 update

Burke County continues the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The county's first noted case occurred on March 22, 2020 and almost two years later the county has seen a cumulative case count of 24,688. As we move forward, this cumulative count will continue to change. As of 2/15/2022, Burke County has conducted 179,745 tests in which 14% have come back positive. This percentage would have been higher had it not been for the release of the COVID-19 vaccine. In Burke, the percent fully vaccinated (5 years and older) stands at 48%. While this percentage is lower than some surrounding counties, our message still stands: vaccinations save lives. Between vaccination clinics being held at the health department and throughout the county, as well as going to the residences of homebound individuals, we have made receiving a COVID vaccine as accessible as possible to the residents of Burke.

Deaths by Gender

Male 54.2%
Female 45.8%

Hospitalizations by Gender

Male 47.6%
Female 51.9%

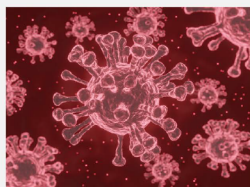
Cases by Gender

Male 46.9%
Female 53.1%

People vaccinated with at Least One Booster/Additional Dose
19,084

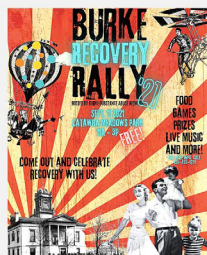
Percent of population vaccinated with Two Doses or One Dose J&J
48%

Resource: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/vaccinations>



Progress Since the 2019 CHA

Substance Use Disorder



Since the 2020 SOTCH, Burke County has continued to see a large increase in the number of overdoses and overdose deaths. In 2021, overdoses (fatal and non-fatal) were 18% higher than in 2020. Fentanyl overdoses increased by 313% and heroin overdoses increased by 23% in 2021. Onsite use of Narcan increased by 84% and calls made to 911 for an overdose increased by 34.5% in 2021.

While these numbers are staggering, Burke County continues to stay in the fight. Even with a few setbacks due to COVID, our Adult Drug Court program was able to graduate 6 individuals in 2021 and sign on 21 new individuals to be a part of the program.

In September 2021, in honor of National Recovery month, our drug-free coalition, Burke Substance Abuse Network (BSAN), partnered with 32 local agencies to create a Recovery Rally event that brought over 500+ individuals together to learn and continue the conversation of substance use disorder in Burke.

Heart Disease and Stroke



At the start of the pandemic, Carolinas Health System-Blue Ridge, now UNC-Health Blue Ridge, saw the need for the development of a Virtual Hospital to help manage the influx of COVID patients they were seeing.

The original design was to assist COVID-positive patients by supporting them while they recovered at home. In 2021, this unit has now expanded to better serve patients as they transition from solely based COVID care to other health diagnosis care such as asthma, COPD, and pneumonia.

In 2021, there were over 4,500 patients enrolled into the Virtual Health Unit. The convenience of the Virtual Care Unit has allowed patients to avoid travel time, busy waiting rooms, while also providing more access for residents of our community who live in more rural settings. Virtual care allows a patient to access their provider and the virtual health team in a variety of ways: online using video chat, by telephone or in-app messaging. A satisfactory survey has been sent out to staff and patients who have worked with or received care through the Virtual Hospital. Results are to be collected Spring 2022.

The Burke Wellness Initiative is the community collaboration responsible for working together to conduct the CHA process along with implementing the priorities that are selected. Additional community members who are passionate about developing positive changes within the county are always welcome to join. If you are interested in being a part of the Burke Wellness Initiative, please contact Chae Moore at 828.764.9220 or chae.moore@burkenc.org.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Taylor made comments regarding Burke County's population, medium household income, and educational attainments. Addressing Burke County citizens, Commissioner Taylor said 42.5 percent of deaths in Burke County are from cancer and heart disease and encouraged everyone

to take care of themselves. Vice Chairman Carswell commended Health Department staff for its forward momentum as well as the DSS Department. Chairman Mulwee and Commissioner Taylor commended Ms. Moore for the report.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

PHM - PROCLAMATION DECLARING MAY AS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Dr. Katie Varnadoe, PHM, reported Partners Health Management requested the approval of a proclamation declaring May as National Mental Health Month for 2022 and urging all citizens and businesses to commit themselves to increasing their awareness and understanding of mental health and the need for accessible services for all people with mental health conditions. Dr. Varnadoe said stigma is one of the most significant barriers to people seeking treatment and by proclaiming May as mental health month, they are helping to reduce that stigma publicly which can enable someone to reach out for help who otherwise would not have done so. She also spoke of the need to address mental health issues early and not wait until they become a stage-four issue.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Vice Chairman Carswell asked about the state of mental health in Burke County. Dr. Varnadoe said PHM is serving more people who are Medicaid eligible and noted at a state level, they are seeing suicides decrease, however, substance use trends are increasing as indicated by the increase in Narcan use. A short discussion ensued.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

TAX DEPT. - TAX COLLECTION REPORT FOR MARCH 2022

John Bridgers, Tax Administrator, presented the tax collection report for March 2022 as follows:

Category	Annual Budget	Amount Collected YTD	% Collected	Balance to Collect
Property Tax	\$45,000,000.00	\$45,117,241.80	100.26%	\$ (117,241.80)
Motor Vehicle Tax	\$5,200,000.00	\$4,137,799.84	79.57%	\$1,062,200.16
Current Year Taxes	\$50,200,000.00	\$49,255,041.64	98.12%	\$944,958.36
Delinquent Taxes	\$700,000.00	\$659,695.91	94.24%	\$40,304.09
Late List Penalty	\$315,000.00	\$306,962.77	97.45%	\$8,037.23

The Tax Levy is the total property tax value not including motor vehicles times the tax rate. This amount changes monthly with the addition of discoveries, other changes, or corrections, and when Public Utility Values are added, typically during September.

Category	Tax Levy	Amount Collected YTD	% Collected	Balance to Collect
Property Tax	\$46,298,015.68	\$45,117,241.80	97.45%	\$1,180,773.88

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Brittain asked, regarding the current year taxes, if it is reasonable to assume that the collection

rate will be 20% over budget for the year given that the current collection is at 98.12%. Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, said collections slow down significantly at this point in the year and noted they will be over 100 percent, but it is hard to estimate how much over they will be. A brief discussion ensued.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

TAX DEPT. - RELEASE REFUND REPORT FOR MARCH 2022

John Bridgers, Tax Administrator, presented the release refund report for March 2022 as follows:

Tax System Refunds and Releases				
	Report Amount	Rebilled Amount	Net Release	Refund Amount
Releases (TR-304)	\$1,349.01	\$503.27	\$845.74	\$290.87

VTS Refunds Over \$100	
	Refund Amount
VTS Adjustments	\$111.39

*Note: The net loss amount is a result of the report amount minus the rebilled amount.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Vice Chairman Carswell asked how long businesses have to inform the County they have closed. Dawn Hutchins, Revenue Collections Supervisor/Deputy Tax Collector, said most of the time they do not let the County know. A brief discussion ensued.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

TAX DEPT. - ORDER TO ADVERTISE 2021 DELINQUENT REAL PROPERTY TAXES

John Bridgers, Tax Administrator, reported pursuant to N.C.G.S. 105-369, the Tax Collector shall report to the governing board the total amount of unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year that are liens on real property.

Category	Annual Budget	Amount Collected	% Collected	Balance to Collect
Property Tax	\$45,000,000.00	\$43,575,745.24	96.83%	\$1,424,254.76
Motor Vehicle Tax	\$5,200,000.00	\$3,204,482.57	61.62%	\$1,995,517.43
Current Year	\$50,200,000.00	\$46,780,227.81	93.19%	\$3,419,772.19
Delinquent Taxes	\$700,000.00	\$520,888.70	74.41%	\$179,111.30
Penalty & Interest	\$315,000.00	\$199,856.38	63.45%	\$115,143.65

Under this statute, the Board orders the Tax Collector to advertise these tax liens on all unpaid real property. Also, a notice must be sent to the owner of record. This notice shall be sent at least 30 days before the advertisement is to be published, to the last known address. These notices state that the owner's name will be advertised if taxes are not paid in full by Friday, February 28, 2022. The Tax Office mailed these notices during January 2022 (see sample).

Notices warning of the lien advertisement were published in the *News Herald* on Sunday February 13, February 20, February 27 and March 6, 2022. Those who have not paid real estate property taxes in full by Friday, February 28, 2022, were advertised. The lien advertisement was published in the *News Herald* on Sunday, March 13, 2022.

BURKE COUNTY
NOTICE
2021 UNPAID REAL PROPERTY TAXES

Notice is hereby given that the Burke County Tax Collector will publish the annual Tax Lien Advertisement of Real Property for 2021 County Taxes, during the month of March. To avoid advertisement of your real property and avoid additional cost, you are requested to pay these 2021 taxes and interest no later than Friday, February 28, 2022.

This Delinquent Tax Notice, that is required to be sent before advertising in the newspaper, also serves as the Debt Setoff (DSO) Notice for Burke County. The Debt Setoff Notice is noted on the front of the delinquent notice. The actual Debt Setoff notice is on the back. This notice gives taxpayers 30 days to pay their delinquent taxes and avoid Burke County intercepting their North Carolina Income Tax refund.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Dawn Hutchins, Revenue Collections Supervisor/Deputy Tax Collector, responded to multiple questions from Commissioner Taylor.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

WPCC - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT APPROVAL - REGIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES TRAINING CENTER

Sandy Hoilman, WPCC Chief Financial Officer, reported WPCC plans to construct a new \$15 million-dollar state-of-the-art fire emergency services training center on the Catawba River using monies appropriated by the N.C. General Assembly, Current Appropriations Act of 2021 (SL 2021-180) as modified by SL 2021-189. The project will be constructed on college owned property. Authorization for the County Manager or Finance Director to execute Section VI, Certification No. 2 (Availability of Local Support and Funds) is requested.

There is no impact on the FY 21-22 budget. The estimated future impact to WPCC's annual operating budget is \$65,802.79. However, the County is only asked to certify that the document has been reviewed and that the information will be shared with the proper county officials to seek an appropriate adjustment to the College's budget as the new facility is brought online.

Ms. Hoilman reviewed the proposed amenities of the planned training center. She said the NC Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) has awarded WPCC a \$15 million grant but said they still must go through the process with the NC community college system and the state construction office. She continued, they need to complete a capital improvement project approval form and a part of that is obtaining a local certification of support from the County which is based on NC General Statute 115D where the County provides maintenance, security,

cleaning, and insurance for facilities of the college. Ms. Hoilman said the estimated annual cost of running the facility will be \$65,803 and includes housekeeping, custodial staff, supplies, maintenance, plant maintenance items, classroom materials, painting, lightbulbs, and utilities which WPCC is requesting county support.

Chairman Mulwee opened the floor for questions and comments from the Board. Commissioner Taylor asked if the estimated annual operating costs will be budgeted over one (1) year or two (2). Ms. Hoilman said that will be an annual request built into their county budget request once the facility is open. Discussion ensued and Ms. Hoilman responded to an additional question from Commissioner Taylor. Commissioner Brittain asked what is the operational cost for their current facility. Ms. Hoilman said approximately \$25,000 and noted it is located on WPCC's campus and is smaller than the proposed new facility. Chairman Mulwee commented on the need for the new facility and the planning that has gone into the project. A short discussion ensued regarding the facility.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 19, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

BOC / BDI - HOMES FOR HOPE HOUSING PROJECT (PLACE HOLDER)

RESULT: REMOVED FROM THE AGENDA.

REPORTS

OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chairman Mulwee reminded everyone to send their reports to Clerk Draughn for inclusion in the agenda packet. He then reminded everyone of the following:

- County offices will be closed on April 15 in observance of Good Friday.
- NCACC Districts 13 / 15 meeting will be held on April 28 at the Community House beginning at 5:30 p.m.
- Spay or neuter your pets and consider adopting a pet from the Animal Services Center.
- Do not litter.

Vice Chairman Carswell thanked Chairman Mulwee, Commissioner Taylor and County staff for attending the NCACC ARP / Opioid summits in Greensboro last week. Chairman Mulwee wished Commissioners Abele and Taylor a happy birthday.

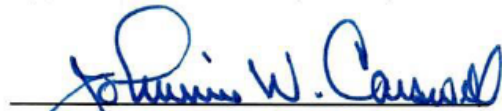
Chairman Mulwee said the Board needs to have an ARP (American Rescue Plan) meeting to give direction to staff regarding the expenditure of those funds and proposed April 20, 2022, as the meeting date.

ADJOURN

Motion: To adjourn at 4:31 p.m.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Maynard M. Taylor, Commissioner
AYES:	Scott Mulwee, Johnnie W. Carswell, Wayne F. Abele, Sr., Jeffrey C. Brittain and Maynard M. Taylor

Approved this 20th day of September 2022.


Johnnie W. Carswell, Vice Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:


Kay Honeysutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board