

TENTATIVE AGENDA AND MEETING NOTICE

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Tuesday, August 18, 2026 at 5:30 PM



Watauga County Administration
Building, Commissioners' Board Room

TIME	#	TOPIC	PRESENTER	PAGE
5:30	1	Call Regular Meeting to Order		
	2	Approval of Minutes - July 21, 2026, Regular Meeting Correction - August 4, 2026, Regular Meeting - August 4, 2026, Closed Session		3
	3	Approval of the August 18, 2026, Agenda		15
5:35	4	Public Comment Limited to a maximum of one hour, with time adjusted based on the number of speakers.	Chairman Braxton Eggers	16
5:40	5	Public Hearing to Allow Citizen Comment on an Economic Development Incentive for Rootsii, LLC	Chairman Braxton Eggers Dr. Brett Taubman Mr. Joe Furman	17
5:45	6	Proposed FY 27-29 Opioid Settlement Spending Authorization Resolution and Amendment to FY 25-26 Opioid Settlement Spending Resolution	Ms. Keisha Maldonado	19
5:50	7	Sanitation Equipment Excavator Purchase Request	Mr. Chris Marriott	26
5:55	8	Tax Matters A. Monthly Collections Report B. Refunds and Releases	Mr. Tyler Rash	35 37
6:00	9	Request to Hold Funds For Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Projects	Mr. Brian Bonville	41
6:05	10	Proposed Increase in County Manager Purchasing Authority	Mr. Deron Geouque	43
6:10	11	Miscellaneous Administrative Matters A. Watauga County Ambulance Franchise Proposed Ordinance B. Wildcat Communications Tower Site Lease Agreement C. Budget Amendments D. Boards and Commissions E. Announcements	Mr. Deron Geouque	45 57 66 68 69
6:15	12	Commissioners' Comments	Chairman Braxton Eggers	70

TIME	#	TOPIC	PRESENTER	PAGE
6:20	13	Break		70
6:25	14	Closed Session		70
		Attorney-Client Matters per G. S. § 143-318.11(a)(3)		
6:30	15	Adjourn		

A G E N D A I T E M 2 :

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- July 21, 2026, Regular Meeting Correction
- August 4, 2026, Regular Meeting
- August 4, 2026, Closed Session

Proposed Correction to July 21, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes:

15. POSSIBLE ACTION AFTER CLOSED SESSION

Hardin Park School

The purchase price for the property is \$2.1 million, with funding to be provided from the Watauga County Schools Capital Improvement Plan budget.

Commissioner Greene, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to approve entering into an Agreement for Purchase and Sale of Improved Real Property with New Market Enterprises, LLC for the acquisition of property for the future Hardin Park School project.

VOTE: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

MEETING MINUTES

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, August 4, 2026

The Watauga County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Tuesday, August 4, 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
 Tim Hodges, Commissioner
 Ronnie Marsh, Commissioner
 Nathan Miller, County Attorney
 Deron Geouque, County Manager
 Madison Mathis, Clerk to the Board

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

Commissioner Marsh offered the prayer and Commissioner Hodges led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Eggers presented the July 21, 2026, regular meeting and closed session minutes.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the July 21, 2026, regular meeting minutes as presented.

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

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the July 21, 2026, closed session minutes as presented.

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

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Eggers called for additions or corrections to the August 4, 2026, agenda.

County Manager Geouque requested the following additions:

- Modify Agenda Item 10 – Miscellaneous Administrative Matters
 - 10 E. Board of Elections Salary Increase
 - 10 F. Boards and Commissions
 - 10 G. Announcements
- Add Item Under Closed Session to include:
 - Acquisition of Real Property per G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(5)

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to approve the August 4, 2026, agenda as amended.

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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people spoke during public comment:

- **Kathryn Watson** – an Appalachian State University employee and Deep Gap resident, spoke regarding a new initiative to connect university researchers with local policymakers. She asked Commissioners to share child and family policy challenges they are hearing about in the community so that the information can help inform related research.

5. INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY REQUESTS AND PROCLAMATION

Ms. Mary McKinney, Founder of *Just Love* and *Purple Pantries*, requested approval of temporary placement of the Remembrance and Hope interactive installation and use of the green space at the Watauga County Human Services Center for the August 28, 2026, International Overdose Awareness Day remembrance event. She also requested consideration of permanent placement of a Purple Pantry at the facility and adoption of a proclamation recognizing August as Overdose Awareness Month and August 31, 2026, as End Overdose in Watauga Day.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the temporary placement of the Remembrance and Hope interactive installation in the green space at the Watauga County Human Services Center for approximately one month; approve use of the

green space for the International Overdose Awareness Day remembrance event on August 28, 2026; approve permanent placement of a Purple Pantry at the Watauga County Human Services Center; adopt a proclamation recognizing August as Overdose Awareness Month and August 31, 2026, as End Overdose in Watauga Day; and waive the fee for a license agreement.

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

6. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM UPDATES AND FUNDING REQUESTS

Dr. Jim Hamilton, Cooperative Extension Director, and Ms. Kendra Phipps provided updates on Cooperative Extension programs and recent accomplishments, including improvements to the greenhouse and Agricultural Center, shared-use agricultural equipment, 4-H programming, agricultural disaster recovery assistance, and the statewide Ag Leads initiative.

Dr. Hamilton presented the proposed design for an agricultural-themed steel mosaic to be installed at the Agricultural Center and requested Board approval of the design. He also requested approval to accept a \$36,900 North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund grant for the purchase of additional shared-use agricultural equipment, which would increase the required County match from \$6,000 to \$6,512.

The Board discussed the staffing model, agricultural disaster recovery funding and deadlines, and the number of farms being lost each year. Commissioner Marsh requested information regarding the number of farms lost annually.

Commissioner Hodges, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to approve the proposed design for the agricultural-themed steel mosaic and accept the \$36,900 North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund grant, with the required County match increased to \$6,512.

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

7. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING HVAC REPLACEMENT UNITS REQUEST

Mr. Robert Marsh, Maintenance Director, presented a request to replace three failed HVAC units serving the Commissioners' Board Room, Conference Room, and County Manager's Conference Room. Staff recommended replacement due to the age and condition of the units. Mr. Marsh presented a proposal from Edmisten Heating and Cooling in the amount of \$48,360.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to approve the purchase of HVAC replacement units from Edmisten Heating and Cooling in the amount of \$48,360 and approve the transfer of funds from the Maintenance Capital Improvement Program to the Maintenance budget.

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

8. EMERGENCY SERVICES REPLACEMENT VEHICLE REQUEST

Mr. Will Holt, Emergency Services Director, requested approval to purchase a 2027 Ford F-450 AEV ambulance from Northwestern Emergency Vehicles to replace a 2020 Emergency Services ambulance from the legacy Watauga Medics, Inc. fleet. The total cost of the vehicle and upfit is \$311,369.00, with funding budgeted in the Emergency Services Capital Improvement Program.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the purchase of a 2027 Ford F-450 AEV ambulance from Northwestern Emergency Vehicles in the amount of \$311,369.00 and approve the transfer of funds from the Emergency Services Capital Improvement Program to the Emergency Services budget.

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

9. CHAPTER 11 GATED COMMUNITY ACCESS GATE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Mr. Jason Walker, Planning and Inspections Director, presented 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 were reviewed and recommended by the Watauga County Planning Board and include

updates to emergency access provisions, radio transceiver gate activation, fail-open and manual override requirements, dual key lock boxes, gate identification placards, and maintenance and inspection standards.

Mr. Walker explained that the proposed changes would address delays experienced by public safety personnel and provide for gates to remain open during emergency events until the event has concluded. Commissioners discussed the process for updating existing gates and communication with gated communities regarding the proposed requirements. Vice-Chairman Castle asked whether a list of gated communities was available for purposes of notifying affected communities.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to schedule a public hearing for September 15, 2026, to consider the proposed amendments to Chapter 11 of the Watauga County Code of Ordinances.

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

10. MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Goforth Road Closure Proposed Resolution

Mr. Deron Geouque, County Manager, presented a proposed resolution requesting that the North Carolina Department of Transportation remove the identified portion of Goforth Road from the State Maintained Road System and complete the necessary procedures to formally close the roadway. The Board had previously approved the petition requesting closure of the roadway segment. Staff noted that NCDOT subsequently advised that a resolution was required to proceed with the request.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to approve the Resolution Requesting Abandonment of a Portion of Goforth Road from the State Maintained Road System and authorize submission of the request to the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

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

B. North Caldwell District EMS Coverage Agreement

The County Manager presented a revised agreement between Watauga County Emergency Services and Caldwell County Emergency Services for EMS coverage in a portion of the North Caldwell District following the relocation of Caldwell County's EMS unit from Blowing Rock. The revised agreement removes the requirement that all Watauga County ambulances be committed before Caldwell County mutual aid assistance would be provided, increases the annual service fee from \$15,000 to \$20,000, and adds an annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment.

County Attorney Miller asked whether Caldwell County had approved the revised agreement. Mr. Geouque confirmed that Caldwell County had approved the agreement.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to approve the revised agreement between Watauga County Emergency Services and Caldwell County Emergency Services for EMS coverage in the designated North Caldwell District service area.

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

C. Watauga County Ambulance Franchise Proposed Ordinance

The County Manager presented the revised Watauga County Ambulance Franchise Ordinance for Board review and discussion. The proposed ordinance establishes requirements for ambulance service franchises within Watauga County, including application and operational requirements, vehicle and equipment standards, reporting requirements, enforcement provisions, and continuation of the EMS Advisory Committee. The revisions reflect the transition from a private ambulance provider to a County-operated EMS system.

The County Manager explained that the proposed ordinance is intended to update the County's requirements to reflect current EMS operations and capacity. The Board discussed the required process for adoption, including presentation at two consecutive Board meetings and a public hearing. County Attorney Miller discussed proposed changes to the EMS Advisory Committee provisions, including the appointment process by the Board of Commissioners.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to schedule a public hearing for September 15, 2026, to receive public comment on the proposed Watauga County Ambulance Franchise Ordinance.

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

D. EMS Facility Utility Easement Request

The County Manager presented a request for approval of a permanent utility easement associated with the Watauga County Emergency Services facility. The easement will provide access to the water meter serving the EMS site and is located near the U.S. 421 entrance to the property. A proposed Deed of Easement and exhibit identifying the easement area were provided for consideration.

Commissioner Hodges, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to approve the Deed of Easement associated with the Emergency Services facility and authorize execution of the document upon approval by County Attorney Miller.

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

E. Board of Elections Salary Increase

The Board discussed a request to increase the Board of Elections salary line item to fund an increase in the hourly wage for two part-time Board of Elections office employees from \$14.00 to \$16.00 per hour. Chairman Eggers reported on his meeting with Mr. Matt Snyder, Board of Elections Director, and noted the importance of addressing the staffing needs prior to the upcoming elections. Chairman Eggers stated that he would continue to meet with Mr. Snyder regarding the matter.

Commissioners discussed the timing of the request in relation to the recently adopted budget and the County's established budget process. County Attorney Miller provided information regarding the statutory authority of the Board of Elections and Board of Commissioners concerning employee compensation and budgetary limitations, noting that the Board of Elections must operate within its appropriated budget.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to increase the Board of Elections salary line item 104170-412600 from \$10,500 to \$12,115, an increase of \$1,615, to fund the increase in the hourly wage for two part-time Board

of Elections office employees from \$14.00 to \$16.00 per hour, as recommended by Director Snyder.

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

F. Boards and Commissions

Parks and Recreation Commission

This item was presented for second reading.

Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to appoint Virginia Roseman as the Town Council representative and Katie Eppley as the Town of Boone representative to the Watauga County Parks and Recreation Commission.

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

Library Board

This item was presented for second reading.

Commissioner Hodges, seconded by Vice-Chairman Castle, moved to appoint Melissa Birkhofer, Jess Bellemer, Cheryl Keller, and Jephrie Foust to the Watauga County Public Library Advisory Board.

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

Valle Crucis Historic Preservation Commission

This item was presented for second reading.

Commissioner Marsh, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to appoint Laura England to the Valle Crucis Historic Preservation Commission.

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

G. Announcements

County Manager Geouque reminded the Board of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) Annual Conference, scheduled for August 20–22, 2026, and asked Commissioners to confirm their attendance so travel arrangements could be made.

11. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

- **Chairman Eggers** expressed appreciation to Commissioner Marsh for visiting areas affected by flooding and thanked the Commissioners, County Attorney Miller, and County Manager Geouque for their work.
- **Vice-Chairman Castle** commented on flooding in Mount Airy.
- **Commissioner Marsh** provided an update on areas affected by flooding and related damage.

12. BREAK

13. CLOSED SESSION

At 6:49 p.m., Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to enter Closed Session pursuant to G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3) to discuss matters protected by attorney-client privilege; and pursuant to G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(5) to consider matters related to the acquisition of real property.

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

At 7:47 p.m., Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Marsh, moved to resume the open meeting.

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

14. ADJOURN

At 7:47 p.m., Vice-Chairman Castle, seconded by Commissioner Hodges, moved to adjourn the meeting.

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

Braxton Eggers, Chairman

ATTEST: Madison Mathis, Clerk to the Board

DRAFT

A G E N D A I T E M 3 :

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 18, 2026, AGENDA

A G E N D A I T E M 4 :

PUBLIC COMMENT

Manager's Comments:

Public Comment is limited to a maximum of one hour, with time adjusted based on the number of speakers.

A G E N D A I T E M 5 :**PUBLIC HEARING TO ALLOW CITIZEN COMMENT ON AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE FOR ROOTSII, LLC****Manager's Comments:**

A public hearing has been scheduled to allow citizen comment on a proposed economic development incentive for Rootsii, LLC pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 158-7.1. Notice of the public hearing has been properly published. The Watauga County Economic Development Commission (EDC) is recommending the use of funds from the EDC Capital Improvement Plan to provide \$12,000 for the construction of a concrete slab to support the installation of a walk-in cooler for the company's sweet potato milk development project.

The proposed incentive is intended to support a viable local manufacturer, with the anticipated public benefit of local job creation and substantial job growth in the near future. The incentive will be subject to conditions established by the Watauga County EDC and Board of Commissioners. Representatives of Rootsii, LLC and the Watauga County EDC will be available to answer questions and provide additional information.

Upon completion of the public hearing, the Board may approve the proposed economic development incentive subject to the established conditions, deny the request, request additional information, or take other appropriate action.

Direction from the Board is requested.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE FOR ROOTSII, LLC

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 158-7.1, notice is hereby given that the Watauga County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, August 18, 2026, at 5:30 P.M., in the Commissioners' Board Room, Watauga County Administration Building, 814 W. King Street, Boone, North Carolina, to consider the granting of an economic development incentive to Rootsii, LLC for a sweet potato milk development project.

The Watauga County Economic Development Commission (EDC) is recommending the use of funds from the EDC Capital Improvement Plan. The request is to provide \$12,000 to fund the construction of a concrete slab to support the installation of the walk-in cooler. The public benefit for this request is that a viable manufacturer will provide local jobs with the expectation of substantial job growth in the near future.

The proposed incentive will be subject to conditions established by the Watauga County EDC and Board of Commissioners.

All interested persons are invited to attend the public hearing. Additional information regarding the proposed economic development incentive may be obtained from the Office of the County Manager during normal business hours by calling (828) 265-8000.

A G E N D A I T E M 6 :**PROPOSED FY 27-29 OPIOID SETTLEMENT SPENDING
AUTHORIZATION RESOLUTION AND AMENDMENT TO FY 25-26
OPIOID SETTLEMENT SPENDING RESOLUTION****Manager's Comments:**

Per the opioid settlement agreement, the attached resolution is required to authorize the expenditure of opioid settlement funds for FY 27-29. An amendment to the FY 25-26 Opioid Settlement Spending Resolution is also proposed to extend the term dates of the HCCH and MRJC/Homestead projects to allow carryover funds to be utilized.

Ms. Keisha Maldonado, Data Manager for AppHealthCare, will be present to provide an overview and answer any questions.

Board action is requested to adopt the FY 27-29 Opioid Settlement Spending Authorization Resolution and approve the amendment to the FY 25-26 resolution.

**A RESOLUTION BY THE COUNTY OF WATAUGA
TO DIRECT THE EXPENDITURE OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS**

WHEREAS Watauga County has joined national settlement agreements with companies engaged in the manufacturing, distribution, and dispensing of opioids.

WHEREAS the allocation, use, and reporting of funds stemming from these national settlement agreements and bankruptcy resolutions (“Opioid Settlement Funds”) are governed by the Memorandum of Agreement Between the State of North Carolina and Local Governments on Proceeds Relating to the Settlement of Opioid Litigation (“MOA”), the Supplemental Agreement for Additional Funds from Additional Settlements of Opioid Litigation (“SAAF”), and SAAF-2;

WHEREAS Watauga County has received Opioid Settlement Funds pursuant to these national settlement agreements and deposited the Opioid Settlement Funds in a separate special revenue fund as required by section D of the MOA;

WHEREAS section E.6 of the MOA states that, before spending opioid settlement funds, the local government’s governing body must adopt a resolution that:

- (i) indicates that it is an authorization for expenditure of opioid settlement funds; and,
- (ii) states the specific strategy or strategies the county or municipality intends to fund pursuant to Option A or Option B, using the item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to identify each funded strategy; and,
- (iii) states the amount dedicated to each strategy for a specific period of time.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, in alignment with the NC MOA, SAAF, and SAAF-2, Watauga County authorizes the expenditure of opioid settlement funds as follows:

1. First strategy authorized

- a. Name of strategy: Collaborative strategic planning
- b. Strategy is included in Exhibit A
- c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to the MOA: Strategy 1
- d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$159,300.00 (\$53,100.00/year)
- e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date August 18, 2026 through End date June 30, 2029
- f. Description of the program, project, or activity: AppHealthCare to coordinate and/or contract with a professional consultant to lead strategic planning efforts for future opioid settlement projects in collaboration with the County, partner agencies, and community stakeholders, oversee and administer opioid settlement funds approved by the County, complete reports in compliance with the NC MOA, develop data and map systems to contribute to future collaborative strategic planning efforts.
- g. Provider: AppHealthCare

2. Second strategy authorized

- a. Name of strategy: Recovery support services
- b. Strategy is included in Exhibit A
- c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to the MOA: Strategy 3
- d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$424,578.21 (\$141,526.07/year)
- e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:

Start date August 18, 2026 through End date June 30, 2029

- f. Description of the program, project, or activity: AppHealthCare to provide linkages to care for medication-assisted treatment, opioid use treatment services, peer support, and harm reduction services for clients impacted by opioid use disorder to prevent and/or reduce overdose deaths in alignment with the Vital Strategies matching funds grant; High Country Community Health to expand case management and peer support services for their MOUD program, Mediation & Restorative Justice Center/Homestead Recovery Center to provide recovery support services through its Peer Service program including basic supplies, nutritional assistance, overdose prevention strategies, shower and laundry services, mobile outreach to high-need areas, weekly recovery support groups and meetings, recovery events throughout the year, as well as support and access to supplies and Peer Service resources embedded throughout all of HRC's programming.
 - g. Provider: AppHealthCare, High Country Community Health, Mediation & Restorative Justice Center/Homestead Recovery Center
3. Third authorized strategy
- a. Name of strategy: Recovery housing support
 - b. Strategy is included in Exhibit A
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to the MOA: Strategy 4
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$256,394.64 (\$85,464.88/year)
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date August 18, 2026 through End date June 30, 2029
 - f. Description of the program, project, or activity: Mediation & Restorative Justice Center/Homestead Recovery Center to operate the only recovery housing program in Watauga County, The Homeplace, as well as provide linkage and financial sponsorship for participants to enter and maintain recovery housing in other areas of the state when The Homeplace beds are full or not a good fit.
 - g. Provider: Mediation & Restorative Justice Center/Homestead Recovery Center
4. Fourth authorized strategy
- a. Name of strategy: Early Intervention
 - b. Strategy is included in Exhibit A
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to the MOA: Strategy 6
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$204,203.37 (\$68,067.79/year)
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date August 18, 2026 through End date June 30, 2029
 - f. Description of the program, project, or activity: High Country Caregivers to fund a Licensed Clinical Social Worker to support individuals through their kinship care program that have been impacted by substance use in the home; Western Youth Network's Mentoring Program to serve students in the mentoring program, all of whom will be referred by school mental health professionals, juvenile court case workers, or Department of Social Services due to substance misuse in the household, as well as to provide Youth Mental Health training sessions for volunteers.
 - g. Provider: High Country Caregivers, Western Youth Network (WYN)

The total dollar amount of Opioid Settlement Funds appropriated across the above named and authorized strategies is \$1,044,476.22 (\$348,158.74/year).

Adopted this the _____ day of _____, 2026.

Braxton Eggers, Chair
Watauga County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Deron Geouque, Watauga County Manager

COUNTY SEAL

A RESOLUTION BY THE COUNTY OF WATAUGA TO DIRECT THE EXPENDITURE OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

WHEREAS Watauga County has joined national settlement agreements with companies engaged in the manufacturing, distribution, and dispensing of opioids, including settlements with drug distributors Cardinal, McKesson, and AmerisourceBergen, and the drug maker Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiary Janssen Pharmaceuticals;

WHEREAS the allocation, use, and reporting of funds stemming from these national settlement agreements and certain bankruptcy resolutions (“Opioid Settlement Funds”) are governed by the Memorandum of Agreement Between the State of North Carolina and Local Governments on Proceeds Relating to the Settlement of Opioid Litigation (“MOA”);

WHEREAS Watauga County has received Opioid Settlement Funds pursuant to these national settlement agreements and deposited the Opioid Settlement Funds in a separate special revenue fund as required by section D of the MOA;

WHEREAS section E.6 of the MOA states:

E.6. Process for drawing from special revenue funds.

- a. Budget item or resolution required. Opioid Settlement Funds can be used for a purpose when the Governing Body includes in its budget or passes a separate resolution authorizing the expenditure of a stated amount of Opioid Settlement Funds for that purpose or those purposes during a specified period of time.
- b. Budget item or resolution details. The budget or resolution should (i) indicate that it is an authorization for expenditure of opioid settlement funds; (ii) state the specific strategy or strategies the county or municipality intends to fund pursuant to Option A or Option B, using the item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to identify each funded strategy, and (iii) state the amount dedicated to each strategy for a stated period of time.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, in alignment with the NC MOA, Watauga County authorizes the expenditure of opioid settlement funds as follows:

1. First strategy authorized
 - a. Name of strategy: Collaborative strategic planning
 - b. Strategy is included in [Exhibit A](#)
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A,
 - i. Strategy 1: Collaborative strategic planning
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$121,245.00
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date July 1, 2025 through End date June 30, 2026
 - f. Description of the program, project, or activity: AppHealthcare to coordinate and/or contract with a professional consultant to lead strategic planning efforts for future opioid settlement projects in collaboration with the County, partner agencies, and community stakeholders, oversee and administer opioid settlement funds approved by the County, complete reports in compliance with the NC

MOA, develop data and map systems to contribute to future collaborative strategic planning efforts.

- g. Provider: AppHealthCare
- 2. Second strategy authorized
 - a. Name of strategy: Recovery support services
 - b. Strategy is included in [Exhibit A](#)
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A,
 - i. Strategy 3: Recovery support services
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$322,344.76
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date July 1, 2025 through End date **June 30, 2027**
 - f. Description of the program, project, or activity: AppHealthCare to provide linkages to care for medication-assisted treatment, opioid use treatment services, peer support, and harm reduction services for clients impacted by opioid use disorder to prevent and/or reduce overdose deaths in alignment with the Vital Strategies matching funds grant; High Country Community Health to expand case management and peer support services for their MOUD program; Mediation & Restorative Justice Center/Homestead Recovery Center to provide recovery support services through its Peer Service program including basic supplies, nutritional assistance, overdose prevention strategies, shower and laundry services, mobile outreach to high-need areas, weekly recovery support groups and meetings, recovery events throughout the year, as well as support and access to supplies and Peer Service resources embedded throughout all of HRC's programming.
 - g. Provider: AppHealthCare, High Country Community Health, Mediation and Restorative Justice Center/Homestead Recovery Center
- 3. Third strategy authorized
 - a. Name of strategy: Recovery housing support
 - b. Strategy is included in [Exhibit A](#)
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A,
 - i. Strategy 4: Recovery housing support
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$71,307.80
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date July 1, 2025 through End date **June 30, 2027**
 - f. Description of the program, project, or activity: Mediation & Restorative Justice Center/Homestead Recovery Center to operate the only recovery housing program in Watauga County, The Homeplace, as well as provide linkage and financial sponsorship for participants to enter and maintain recovery housing in other areas of the state when The Homeplace beds are full or not a good fit.
 - g. Provider: Mediation and Restorative Justice Center/Homestead Recovery Center
- 4. Fourth strategy authorized
 - a. Name of strategy: Early intervention
 - b. Strategy is included in [Exhibit A](#)
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A,
 - i. Strategy 6: Early intervention
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$130,205.00
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date July 1, 2025 through End date June 30, 2026

- f. Description of the program, project, or activity: High Country Caregivers to fund a Licensed Clinical Social Worker to support individuals through their kinship care program that have been impacted by substance use in the home; Western Youth Network's Mentoring Program to serve students in the mentoring program, all of whom will be referred by school mental health professionals, juvenile court case workers, or Department of Social Services due to substance misuse in the household, as well as to provide Youth Mental Health training sessions for volunteers.
 - g. Provider: High Country Caregivers, Western Youth Network (WYN)
5. Fifth strategy authorized
- a. Name of strategy: Naloxone distribution
 - b. Strategy is included in [Exhibit A](#)
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A,
 - i. Strategy 7: Naloxone distribution
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$23,166.00
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date July 1, 2025 through End date **June 30, 2027**
 - f. Description of the program, project, or activity: High Country Community Health to provide Naloxone to individuals in the community and those they serve as well as provide training and education on how to use Naloxone.
 - g. Provider: High Country Community Health

The total dollar amount of Opioid Settlement Funds appropriated across the above named and authorized strategy is \$668,268.56

Adopted this the 3rd day of June, 2025.

Revised and amended this the _____ day of _____, 2026.

Braxton Eggers, Chair
Watauga County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Deron Geouque, County Manager

COUNTY SEAL

A G E N D A I T E M 7 :**SANITATION EQUIPMENT EXCAVATOR PURCHASE REQUEST****Manager's Comments:**

Mr. Chris Marriott, Operations Services Director, will request approval to purchase a 2026 John Deere 160P excavator for the Watauga County Sanitation Department. The excavator will replace the department's former machine, which was destroyed by fire on June 16, 2026, and determined to be a total loss by the County's insurance company. The insurance settlement was \$169,530.51.

The excavator, including a Rockland Thumb, fire suppression system, and extended warranty, is available through the Sourcewell cooperative purchasing contract from James River Equipment of Wilkesboro for a total cost of \$289,055.15. The insurance settlement will be applied toward the purchase, with the remaining \$119,524.64 funded through the Sanitation Department's FY27 Operating Budget. A budget amendment is requested to transfer \$119,524.64 from 667420-454000 (Capital Outlay-Vehicles) to 667420-455002 (Capital Outlay-Equipment).

Board action is requested to approve the purchase of a 2026 John Deere 160P excavator and associated equipment and services from James River Equipment of Wilkesboro for \$289,055.15 and approve the budget adjustment transferring \$119,524.64 from Capital Outlay-Vehicles to Capital Outlay-Equipment.



WATAUGA COUNTY

SANITATION
DEPARTMENT

336 Landfill Road – Boone, NC 28607 – (828) 264-5305
TDD 1-800-735-2962 – Voice 1-800-735-8262 – FAX (828) 264-3230

August 11, 2026

To: Deron Geouque, County Manager

From: Chris Marriott,  Operations Services Director

Subject: Sanitation Equipment (excavator) Purchase Request

Please see attached quote, for procurement of a 2026 John Deere 160P excavator for the Watauga County Sanitation Department. This vehicle is primarily utilized for the management of the brush and logs at the treatment and processing area for vegetative waste. This includes managing incoming brush and limbs, loading the tub grinder, and the loading of mulch in customer vehicles.

This is a replacement for the former excavator that was purchased in 2023. The former machine was destroyed by fire on June 16, 2026. The excavator was determined to be a total loss by the County's insurance company. The insurance company provided a payout of \$169,530.51 for the loss of the machine.

The requested 2026 John Deere excavator has been cooperatively bid and is on the statewide Sourcewell contract. To meet the needs of the department additional equipment and services of a Rockland Thumb, fire suppression system, and an extended warranty were requested. Prices for each are as follows:

Part	Use	Price
2026 John Deere 160P excavator	Base equipment	\$214,000
Fire Suppression System	Prevent future total loss and protect operators	\$24,000
Extended Warranty	5 year or 8000-hour comprehensive coverage	\$16,445
2025 Rockland Thumb	Provide ability 'grab' material	\$10,000
2025 Rockland 36"	Bucket to 'scoop' material	\$5,700
Taxes		\$18,910.15
TOTAL		\$289,055.15

Staff requests Board of Commissioner's approval to purchase a 2026 John Deere 160P excavator and listed parts from James River Equipment of Wilkesboro for \$289,055.15.

The insurance settlement of \$169,530.51 will be utilized for this purchase along with \$119,524.64 from the Sanitation Department's FY27 Operating Budget. The Department had budgeted \$216,000 for a replacement roll-off truck this year in 667420-454000. The purchase of a roll-off truck will be delayed until FY28. A budget adjustment will be made to transfer \$119,524.64 to from 667420-454000 (Capital Outlay-Vehicles) to 667420-455002 (Capital Outlay-Equipment) to complete this purchase.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

**Prepared For**

WATAUGA COUNTY SANITATION
336 LANDFILL RD
BOONE, NC 286079568
PHILLIP.HARRISON@WATGOV.
ORG

Prepared By

Justin Gentry
James River Equipment
288 Westgate Drive
Wilkesboro, NC 28697
336-973-8201
Justin.Gentry@jamesriverequipment.
com

Quote Id 2253698

Creation Date 17-Jun-2026

Expiration Date 10-Sep-2026

Quote Summary

Equipment Summary	Selling Price	QTY In Group	Extended
New 2026 JOHN DEERE FT4/8'6" M-ARM/28"/AUX-w/AFL/PC/SV CAM/QC-RDY 04D0FF-1FF160PAKTF000922	\$238,000.00	1	\$238,000.00
Extended Warranty 160 P, Comprehensive, 8000 Total Hours or 60 Total Months, 200 Deductible Date Quoted : 17-Jun-2026			\$16,445.00
New 2025 ROCKLAND ROCKLAND/HYDRAULIC PROLINK THUMB/160/36"/42" ATTACH-427648	\$10,000.00	1	\$10,000.00
New 2025 ROCKLAND 36"/ROCKLAND/160 EB/160 36" R-436788	\$5,700.00	1	\$5,700.00
Equipment Total			\$270,145.00
Quote Summary			
Total Selling Price			\$270,145.00
NCSales Tax - (7.0%)			\$18,910.15
Sub-total			\$289,055.15
Balance Due			\$289,055.15

Salesperson : X _____

Accepted By : X _____



Selling Equipment

Quote # 2253698
Customer WATAUGA COUNTY SANITATION

New 2026 JOHN DEERE FT4/8'6"M-ARM/28"/AUX-w/AFL/PC/SV CAM/QC-RDY 04D0FF

QTY In Group : 1

Selling Price

Hours 5 \$254,445.00
Serial Number 1FF160PAKTF000922
Stock Number 4003999
PUK Parent Serial # - - -

Equipment Summary

Code	Description	Qty	Adjusted Selling Price
04D0FF	FT4/8'6"M-ARM/28"/AUX-w/AFL/PC/SV CAM/QC	1	\$287,905.00

Base / Options

Code	Description	Qty	Adjusted Selling Price
0202	United States	1	\$0.00
0259	English	1	\$0.00
2000	Less Grade Reference Ready Mounts	1	\$0.00
170K	JDLink	1	\$0.00
TERM	STOCK EXTENDED TERMS CE	1	\$0.00
7800	Less: Bucket	1	\$0.00
6667	One Piece Boom w/Arm Cyl. and Plumbing	1	\$0.00
6717	Arm: Standard	1	\$0.00
1101	Right, Rear and Left Camera System	1	\$0.00
4070	John Deere PowerTech PSS 4.5L meets FT4	1	\$0.00
5707	700mm (28 in) Steel Track with Triple S	1	\$0.00
YMDF	MDF Charge	1	\$0.00
YWLC	Will Call Charge	1	\$0.00
8124	Fuel Filter, Severe-Duty	1	\$192.00
7001	Auxiliary High-Flow Lines with AFL and	1	\$5,477.00
7041	Hydraulic Coupler Ready Lines and Contr	1	\$3,404.00
0603	Level 3	1	\$4,721.00
Total Base / Options			\$301,699.00

Dealer Attachments



Code	Description	Qty	Adjusted Selling Price
	FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM	1	\$24,000.00
Total Dealer Attachments			\$24,000.00

Customer Discounts

Description	Discount Amount
Customer Discount	(\$87,699.00)
Total Discounts	(\$87,699.00)

Value Added Services

Description	Qty	Agreed Price
Extended Warranty	1	\$16,445.00
Total Value Added Services		\$16,445.00
Selling Price Subtotal		\$254,445.00
Total Selling Price		\$254,445.00

Warranty Coverage

Type	Term	Expiration Date
EMISSIONS WARRANTY	EMISSION 60M/3000H	2031-08-05
FACTORY UNDERCARRIAGE	FACTORY U/C 36M/4000 H	2029-08-03
STRUCTURALL	STRUCTURAL 36M/10000H	2029-08-03
BASIC WARRANTY	BASIC 12M	2027-08-05
EXTENDED WARRANTY (POWERTRAIN & HYDRAULIC)	EXT PT;H FLD-SAM W/ DIAG 60 M/5000 H	2031-08-03


**New 2025 ROCKLAND ROCKLAND/HYDRAULIC PROLINK THUMB/160
/36"/42" ATTACH**

QTY In Group : 1

Selling Price

Hours	0	\$10,000.00
Serial Number	427648	
Stock Number	1105155	
PUK Parent Serial #	- - -	

Equipment Summary

Code	Description	Qty	Adjusted Selling Price
ATTACH	ROCKLAND/HYDRAULIC PROLINK THUMB/160/36"	1	\$0.01
Total Base / Options			\$0.01

Dealer Attachments

Code	Description	Qty	Adjusted Selling Price
	Install Fee	1	\$1,800.00
Total Dealer Attachments			\$1,800.00

Customer Discounts

Description	Discount Amount
Customer Discount	\$8,199.99
Total Discounts	\$8,199.99
Selling Price Subtotal	\$10,000.00
Total Selling Price	\$10,000.00



New 2025 ROCKLAND 36"/ROCKLAND/160 EB/160 36" R

QTY In Group : 1

Hours	100	Selling Price
Serial Number	436788	\$5,700.00
Stock Number	1209989	
PUK Parent Serial #	- - -	

Equipment Summary

Code	Description	Qty	Adjusted Selling Price
EB/160 36" R	36"/ ROCKLAND/ 160P	1	\$0.01
Total Base / Options			\$0.01

Customer Discounts

Description	Discount Amount
Customer Discount	\$5,699.99
Total Discounts	\$5,699.99
Selling Price Subtotal	\$5,700.00
Total Selling Price	\$5,700.00



Extended Warranty Proposal

PowerGard™ Protection Plan

New 2026 JOHN DEERE FT4/8'6"M-ARM/28"/AUX-w/AFL/PC/SV CAM/QC-RDY 04D0FF

Serial Number: 1FF160PAKTF000922

Date: 11-Aug-2026

Machine/Use Information		Plan Description		Price	
Manufacturer	JOHN DEERE	Plan Type		Deductible	\$200.00
Equipment Type	Excavators	Warranty Coverage	Comprehensive	Quoted Price	\$16,445.00
Model	160 P	Total Months	60	PowerGard List	\$16,445.00
Country	US	Total Hours	8000	Date Quoted	17-Jun-2026

MFWD/Tracks N

GRACE pricing is only good during the first 12 months or 1000 hours of ownership for new tractors during the John Deere basic warranty period. After this period, DELAYED pricing can be purchased up to the end of the John Deere basic warranty for tractors of 24 months or 2000 hours, and having passed a special inspection/certification process. The Total Months and Hours listed above include the John Deere basic Warranty. "Limited" Plan coverage = Engine & Powertrain only. "Comprehensive" Plan coverage = Full Machine.

PowerGard Protection Proposal Prepared for:

I have been offered this extended warranty and

☒ I ACCEPT the PowerGard Protection

☐ I DECLINE the PowerGard Protection

Customer Name - Please Print

Customer Signature

If declined, I fully understand that any equipment listed above is not covered for customer Expenses due to component failures beyond the original basic warranty period provided by John Deere.

Note: This is not a contract. For specific PowerGard Protection coverage terms and conditions, please refer to the actual PowerGard Protection Plan contract for more information and the terms, conditions, and limitations of the agreement.

What PowerGard Protection is:

The PowerGard Protection Plan is an **extended warranty** program for reimbursement on parts and labor for covered components that fail due to faulty material or original workmanship that occur beyond the John Deere Basic Warranty coverage period. The agreement is between Deere & Company and the owners of select John Deere Commercial and Agricultural equipment, who purchase the PowerGard Plans for the desired coverage as indicated in this proposal.

What PowerGard Protection is not:

PowerGard Protection is **not insurance**. It also does not cover routine maintenance or high wear items, or insurance-related risks/perils such as collision, overturn, vandalism, wind, fire, hail, etc. It does not cover loss of income or loss of value of crops during or after an equipment failure. See the actual product-specific PowerGard Protection Plan agreement for a complete listing of covered components, and limitations and conditions under the program.

Features/Benefits:

PowerGard Protection includes the following features and benefits under the program:

- Pays for parts and labor costs incurred on failed covered components (less any applicable deductibles).
- Does not require pre-approval before repairs are made by the authorized John Deere dealership.
- Payments are reimbursed directly to the dealership, with no prepayment required by the contract holder.
- PowerGard Protection agreements ensure that only Genuine John Deere Parts are used in all repairs.
- PowerGard coverage is fully transferable to future owners, with no transfer fees when coverage remains.
- PowerGard ensures higher resale value and makes equipment more marketable during the sale or trade-in.
- PowerGard allows you to budget your total cost of ownership, with financing available through John Deere Financial or other sources.
- PowerGard helps prevent large, unexpected repair bills during later years of equipment ownership, in exchange for a smaller protection fee up front.


JOHN DEERE FINANCIAL

GET MORE DONE WITH SMART FINANCING

At John Deere Financial, we offer practical financing solutions built for the demands of construction and forestry. Backed by deep industry expertise, we're committed to your growth and make it easy to secure financing that works as hard as you do, keeping ownership and operation of your machinery seamless and affordable.



DEEP INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE

- We understand how you work, the equipment you depend on, and the challenges you face.
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- Backed by generations of experience supporting customers through good and challenging seasons, we stay invested even when other lenders step away.

BUILT FOR YOUR NEEDS

- We offer customized plans with competitive rates tailored to your specific operation and goals.
- We have flexible payment options that match the way you earn and work, delivering reliability you can count on.
- Our cost-effective financing options simplify owning and operating John Deere equipment.

CONVENIENT, STREAMLINED EXPERIENCE

- We offer fast, convenient financing for your equipment, technology, parts, and service with access to special seasonal promotions.
- Enjoy a seamless digital experience with electronic statements, account management through MyFinancial Accounts, secure electronic signature options, and support at every step.
- Pay your way with easy self-service tools.



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A G E N D A I T E M 8 :

TAX MATTERS

A. Monthly Collections Report

Manager's Comments:

Mr. Tyler Rash, Tax Administrator, will present the Monthly Collections Report for July 2026, and be available for questions and discussion.

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

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 July 2026

	<u>Current Month Collections</u>	<u>Current FY Collections</u>	<u>Current FY Percentage</u>	<u>Previous FY Percentage</u>
<u>General County</u>				
Taxes 2026	0.00	0.00		
Prior Year Taxes	48,469.22	0.00		
Solid Waste User Fees	6,088.21	0.00		
 Total County Funds	 \$54,557.43	 \$0.00		
<u>Fire Districts</u>				
Foscoe Fire	149.14	0.00		
Boone Fire	1,724.83	0.00		
Fall Creek Service Dist.	0.00	0.00		
Beaver Dam Fire	288.55	0.00		
Stewart Simmons Fire	834.52	0.00		
Zionville Fire	835.75	0.00		
Cove Creek Fire	309.31	0.00		
Shawneeohaw Fire	153.69	0.00		
Meat Camp Fire	748.63	0.00		
Deep Gap Fire	157.38	0.00		
Todd Fire	0.00	0.00		
Blowing Rock Fire	571.56	0.00		
M.C. Creston Fire	0.00	0.00		
Foscoe Service District	55.11	0.00		
Beech Mtn. Service Dist.	0.00	0.00		
Cove Creek Service Dist.	0.00	0.00		
Shawneeohaw Service Dist	0.00	0.00		
 Total Fire Districts	 5,828.47	 -		
<u>Towns</u>				
Boone	3,488.28	0.00		
Municipal Services	89.83	0.00		
 Total Town Taxes	 \$3,578.11	 \$0.00		
 Total Amount Collected	 \$63,964.01	 \$0.00		

Regina Houck Tax Collections Director

Lyler Rask Tax Administrator

A G E N D A I T E M 8 :

TAX MATTERS

B. Refunds and Releases

Manager's Comments:

Mr. Tyler Rash, Tax Administrator, will present the Refunds and Releases for July 2026, and be available for questions and discussion.

Board action is requested to accept the July 2026 Refunds and Releases Report.

RELEASES - 07/01/2026 TO 07/31/2026

OWNER NAME AND ADDRESS	CAT YEAR PROPERTY REASON	BILL EFF DATE JUR	REF NO	VALUE		AMOUNT
					CHARGE	
1134857 REESE, HITE DALE AND JOYCE 4137 RUSH BRANCH RD SUGAR GROVE, NC 28679-9442	RE 2026	18 07/20/2026		0	F04	40.35
	1953-85-2370-000	F04			G01	256.63
	TAX RELEASES		12726			-----
	ROLLBACK BILL ESTIMATE ONLY. WILL NOT BE BILLED.					296.98
1134857 REESE, HITE DALE AND JOYCE 4137 RUSH BRANCH RD SUGAR GROVE, NC 28679-9442	RE 2026	19 07/20/2026		0	F04	40.35
	1953-85-2370-000	F04			G01	256.63
	TAX RELEASES		12727			-----
	ROLLBACK BILL ESTIMATE ONLY. WILL NOT BE BILLED.					296.98
1134857 REESE, HITE DALE AND JOYCE 4137 RUSH BRANCH RD SUGAR GROVE, NC 28679-9442	RE 2026	20 07/20/2026		0	F04	40.35
	1953-85-2370-000	F04			G01	256.63
	TAX RELEASES		12728			-----
	ROLLBACK BILL ESTIMATE ONLY. WILL NOT BE BILLED.					296.98
DETAIL SUMMARY	COUNT: 3	RELEASES - TOTAL		0		890.94

RELEASES - 07/01/2026 TO 07/31/2026

RELEASES - CHARGE SUMMARY FOR ALL CLERKS

YEAR				CAT	CHARGE	AMOUNT
2026	RE	F04	BEAVER DAM FIRE RE			121.05
2026	RE	G01	WATAUGA COUNTY RE			769.89
2026 TOTAL						890.94
SUMMARY TOTAL						890.94

RELEASES - 07/01/2026 TO 07/31/2026

RELEASES - JURISDICTION SUMMARY FOR ALL CLERKS

JUR	YEAR	CHARGE	AMOUNT
F04	2026	F04 BEAVER DAM FIRE RE	121.05
F04	2026	G01 WATAUGA COUNTY RE	769.89
F04 TOTAL			890.94
SUMMARY TOTAL			890.94

A G E N D A I T E M 9 :**REQUEST TO HOLD FUNDS FOR STREAMFLOW REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE PROJECTS****Manager's Comments:**

Mr. Brian Bonville, Soil and Water Conservation Technician, will request approval for Watauga County to hold grant funds awarded to the Watauga County Soil and Water Conservation District by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance projects addressing damages resulting from Hurricane Helene. The funding will support six projects to restore stream functionality and safety, including a pond dam removal on Howard's Creek, culvert and stream repairs at Poplar Grove Road and Tater Hill Road, and streambank restoration at Valle Crucis Community Park, Watauga Gun Club, and Brookshire Park.

The County Manager and Board Chair are required to sign the necessary documentation for the County to hold the grant funds.

Board action is requested to approve Watauga County to hold the grant funds and authorize the County Manager and Board Chair to execute the required documentation.



Watauga County Soil & Water Conservation District

**971 West King Street
Boone, NC 28607
(828) 719 - 3409**

TO: Watauga County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Brian Bonville, Watauga Soil and Water Conservation Technician

DATE: 8/12/2026

Watauga County Soil and Water Conservation District has received funding from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer services to conduct Streamflow rehabilitation assistance projects that address damages from Hurricane Helene. We are requesting that the county sponsor these six projects to restore stream functionality and safety. These projects include a pond dam removal on Howard's Creek, culvert and stream repair at Poplar Grove rd., Sharp creek at Tater Hill rd., and stream bank restoration at Valle Crucis Community Park, Watauga Gun club, and Brookshire Park. The County Manager and County Commission Chair must sign approval for the county to hold these funds.

Respectfully,

Brian "Bonny" Bonville

Watauga County SWCD Conservation Technician

Office: 828 719 3385

Cell: 910 783 9075

Board of Supervisors

**Bill Moretz
David Tucker**

Denny Norris, Chair

**Nate Coppenbarger
Jennie Hanifan**

A G E N D A I T E M 1 0 :**PROPOSED INCREASE IN COUNTY MANAGER PURCHASING
AUTHORITY****Manager's Comments:**

Mr. Deron Geouque, County Manager/Finance Director, will present a request to increase the County Manager's purchasing authority from \$15,000 to \$30,000. The \$15,000 limit has been in place for over 25 years. The Board previously granted the Manager authority to sell surplus property under the \$30,000 threshold. The proposed increase would provide greater efficiency for routine and previously budgeted purchases while maintaining the Board's oversight of County expenditures.

Board action is requested to approve increasing the County Manager's purchasing authority from \$15,000 to \$30,000 and authorize the necessary amendments to the County's purchasing policy.



WATAUGA COUNTY FINANCE OFFICE

814 West King St., Room 216 - Boone, NC 28607 - Phone (828) 265-8007 Fax (828) 265-8006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deron Geouque, County Manager
FROM: Misty Watson, Finance
SUBJECT: Increase in County Manager Purchasing Authority

DATE: August 11, 2026

The purpose of this memorandum is to request approval to increase the County Manager's purchasing authority from \$15,000 to \$30,000.

The County's current purchasing policy authorizes the County Manager to approve purchases up to \$15,000 without additional approval by the Board of County Commissioners. As the cost of goods and services has increased and the County's operational needs have evolved, the existing threshold can result in routine and previously budgeted purchases requiring additional Board approval.

Increasing the County Manager's purchasing authority to \$30,000 would better align the approval threshold with current County operations and provide greater efficiency in the purchasing process.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners approve an increase in the County Manager's purchasing authority from \$15,000 to \$30,000 and authorize the necessary amendments to the County's purchasing policy.

A G E N D A I T E M 1 1 :

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Watauga County Ambulance Franchise Proposed Ordinance

Manager's Comments:

The County Manager will present the revised Watauga County Ambulance Franchise Ordinance for the second required Board review and discussion prior to adoption. The ordinance establishes 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 revised ordinance reflects the transition from a private provider to a County-operated EMS system.

A public hearing has been scheduled for September 15, 2026, to receive public comment on the proposed ordinance. Following the public hearing, the Board may consider adoption of the ordinance.

Board action is requested to receive the second presentation and consider any revisions prior to the public hearing.

ORDINANCE NUMBER XXX

WATAUGA COUNTY AMBULANCE FRANCHISE ORDINANCE

An ordinance governing the granting of franchises for ambulance services and other pre-hospital emergency medical services. The County of Watauga Board of Commissioners does ordain the following:

Section I. Definitions

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions shall apply in the interpretation and enforcement of this ordinance:

1.1 Ambulance – The term “ambulance” shall mean any publicly or privately-owned vehicle that is specifically designed, constructed, or modified and equipped, and is intended to be used for and is maintained or operated for the transportation upon the streets and highways in this State of persons who are sick, injured, wounded, or otherwise incapacitated or helpless. All ambulances shall be licensed by the North Carolina Office of EMS.

1.2 Ambulance Service – The term “ambulance service” shall mean a public or privately-owned enterprise that is engaged in the transportation of patients to emergency and/or non-emergency medical facilities.

1.3 Approved – The terms “approved” or “approval” shall mean approved by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission pursuant to the latter’s rules and regulations promulgated under North Carolina General Statutes 143B-165.

1.4 Back-up Ambulance Service – The term “back-up ambulance service” shall mean the system of personnel and equipment meeting the same criteria as the ambulance service but not normally dispatched as first call response.

1.5 Basic Rescue – “Basic Rescue” shall mean the easiest rescue/transport and generally handled with a minimum of equipment.

1.6 County – The term “County” shall mean the County of Watauga Board of Commissioners and its designated representative(s).

1.7 Telecommunicator – The term “telecommunicator” shall mean a person who is available at all times to receive requests for emergency services, to dispatch emergency services, and to advise the appropriate resources and personnel of any existing or threatened emergencies. The telecommunicator shall constitute the Communication Center designated by the Board of Commissioners by resolution.

1.8 Emergency – The term emergency includes the operation of an ambulance in order to provide medical care and transportation of a patient who needs immediate medical treatment in order to prevent loss of life or further aggravation of physiological or psychological illness or injury.

1.9 Emergency Medical Facility – The term "emergency medical facility" shall mean a designated area within a hospital where there is available on a twenty-four (24) hour basis, staffing by qualified medical and hospital support personnel, all types of specialists, blood banks, general and special purpose operating rooms, diagnostic facilities, and equipment capable of rendering complex and comprehensive emergency care.

1.10 Emergency Medical Responder – The term "emergency medical responder" involves the individual who is responsible for the operation of an ambulance and rendering assistance to the Emergency Medical Technician during the transportation of a patient. The emergency medical responder shall at least be certified as an "emergency medical responder" by the State of North Carolina.

1.11 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – The term "emergency medical technician" shall mean an individual who has completed the minimum program for emergency medical technician certification, and is so certified by the State of North Carolina. The individual is responsible for medical care during the transportation of patients prior to arrival at a hospital, assuming no other person of higher medical certification or license is available. This term is inclusive of all credentials issued by NCOEMS at or above the EMT-Basic level.

1.12 First Responder – The term "first responder" shall mean the first dispatched medical or rescue aid to arrive at the scene and provide emergency medical assistance to stabilize the patient while waiting for further medical aid and/or transport.

1.13 Franchise – The term "franchise" shall mean a permit issued by the County to a person for the operation of an ambulance service.

1.14 Franchisee – The term "franchisee" shall mean any person having been issued a franchise by the County for the operation of an ambulance service.

1.15 Highway or Street – The term "highway or street" shall mean the entire width between property or right-of-way lines of every way or place or whatever nature, when any part thereof is open to the use of the public or as a matter of right for the purpose of vehicular traffic. The terms "highway" or "street" or a combination of the two terms shall be used synonymously.

1.16 License – The term "license" shall mean any driver's license or permit to operate a motor vehicle issued under or granted by the laws of the State of North Carolina.

1.17 Motor Vehicle – A "motor vehicle" is any device in, upon, or by which any person or property is or may be transported upon a highway, excepting devices moved by human power or used exclusively upon fixed rails or tracks.

1.18 Non-Emergency Transportation Services – "Non-emergency transportation service" includes the operation of an ambulance for any purpose other than an emergency.

1.19 Operator – The term "operator" shall mean a person in actual physical control of an ambulance which is in motion or which has the engine running.

1.20 Owner – The term "owner" shall mean any person or entity who owns and operates an ambulance service.

1.21 Patient – The term "patient" shall mean an individual who is sick, injured, wounded, or otherwise incapacitated or in need of care.

1.22 Person – The term "person" shall mean any individual, firm, partnership, association, corporation, company, group of individuals acting together for a common purpose, or organization of any kind, including any governmental agency.

1.23 Rescue – The term "rescue" shall mean situations where the victim cannot escape an area through the normal exit or under his own power.

Section II. Franchise Required

2.1 No person either as owner, agent or otherwise, shall furnish, operate, conduct, maintain, advertise or otherwise be engaged in or profess to be engaged in the business or service of emergency and/or non-emergency transportation of patients within the County of Watauga unless the person holds a valid permit for each ambulance used in such business or service issued by the Office of Emergency Medical Services of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and has a franchise for the operation of such business or service by the County pursuant to this Ordinance.

2.2 No individual shall drive, attend, or permit a vehicle to be operated for ambulance purposes within the County of Watauga unless this individual holds a currently valid certification as a medical responder or emergency medical technician issued by the State of North Carolina. An exception to this section shall apply only when the State of North Carolina issues such exemption through the North Carolina Office of EMS.

2.3 No franchise shall be required for:

(A) Any entity rendering assistance as requested in the case of a major catastrophe or emergency where the services of the County of Watauga are insufficient or unable to cope; or,

(B) Any entity operated from a location or headquarters outside of the County of Watauga in order to transport patients who are picked up beyond the limits of the County of Watauga or to transport patients from within the County of Watauga to other areas, but no such entity shall be used to pick up patients within the County of Watauga for transporting to locations within the County of Watauga unless it is rendering assistance as referred to in 2.3 (A) above; or,

(C) Law enforcement personnel; or,

(D) Volunteer rescue squads; or,

(E) Ambulance owned or operated by an Agency of the United States Government; or,

(F) The County of Watauga.

Section III. Application for Ambulance Franchise

3.1 Application for a franchise to operate ambulances in the County of Watauga hereunder shall be made upon such forms as may be prepared or prescribed by the County and shall contain:

(A) The name and address of the applicant and of the owner(s) of the business, ambulances, facilities and equipment.

(B) All trade, DBA, or other names, if any, under which the applicant does business, along with a certified copy of each assumed name certificate stating such name or articles of incorporation stating such name.

(C) A resume of the training and experience of the applicant in the transportation and care of patients.

(D) A description and copy of State certification for each ambulance owned, operated or proposed to be owned or operated by the applicant.

(E) Audited financial statement of the applicant as the same pertains to its ability to provide ambulance service in the County of Watauga and comply with this ordinance. The financial statement to be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting procedures by a certified public accountant and in such forms and such detail as the County may require.

(F) A description of the need the franchise applicant is intending to address and how the applicant will address it.

(G) The location, description and legal arrangements for occupancy of the place or places from which the applicant intends to operate.

(H) Specify the hospital that will serve as sponsoring hospital for the service; it must be a facility located in Watauga County.

(I) Proof of insurance requirements in accordance with Section X.

Section IV. Granting of Franchise

4.1 A non-exclusive franchise may be granted for operating ambulance services within the boundaries of Watauga County, which shall constitute the service district. The Board of County Commissioners shall have the authority to redistrict the County at any time at its discretion with the consent and agreement of any then franchisee.

4.2 Any franchise granted hereunder shall be for the operation of emergency and/or non-emergency transportation services.

4.3 Upon receipt of an application for a franchise, the County shall schedule a time and place for hearing the applicant. Within thirty (30) days after hearing, the County shall cause such investigation as it may deem necessary to be made of the applicant and his proposed operations.

4.4 A franchise may be granted if the County finds that:

(A) The public convenience and necessity require the proposed ambulance service and it represents a reasonable and cost-effective manner of meeting the need;

(B) Each such ambulance of the applicant, his required equipment and the premises designated in the application, has been certified by the County and State of North Carolina;

(C) Only duly licensed staff are employed in such capacities; and

(D) The applicant can meet state standards and provisions outlined in this ordinance by the commencement date for the service.

(E) The granting of the franchise does not negatively impact the operations or efficiency of the Watauga County EMS System as determined in the sole discretion of the County.

Section V. Term of Franchise

5.1 The County may issue a franchise hereunder to the owner of an ambulance service, to be valid for a term set by the County, provided that either party, at its option, may terminate with or without cause the franchise upon one hundred eighty (180) calendar days, or less with the concurrence of both parties, upon prior written notice to the other party. After a

notice of service termination is given, the ambulance service shall re-apply for a franchise if continued service is desired.

5.2 If any franchisee shall fail to comply with or violate any provision of this Ordinance, or a franchise issued hereunder, the County shall cite franchisee for said violation or failure to comply. The County, after a hearing before the Board or Commissioners pursuant to the citation, may impose a civil penalty or \$100.00 for each separate breach as provided in Section 13.1 hereinafter, and may suspend or revoke the franchise. If the County shall thereafter find that the franchisee has corrected any deficiencies and has brought its operation into compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance, the franchise revocation or suspension may be rescinded by the County but a civil penalty as provided in 13.1 hereinafter may be imposed.

5.3 Upon the effective date of any suspension, revocation, or termination of a franchise granted hereunder, such franchised ambulance service immediately shall cease operations.

5.4 Upon suspension, revocation, or termination of a driver's license or medical certificate, such person shall cease to drive an ambulance or provide medical care in conjunction with an ambulance service, or attend an ambulance and no person shall employ or permit such individual to drive an ambulance or provide medical care in conjunction with an ambulance service.

Section VI. Standards for Ambulance Franchise

6.1 Each franchised ambulance service shall at all times comply with the requirements of this Ordinance, the franchise granted hereunder, and all applicable State and local laws relating to health, sanitation, safety, equipment, and ambulance design and all other laws and ordinances.

6.2 Any change of ownership or shareholders, or percentage thereof, or a franchised ambulance service without the approval of the County shall at the County's option terminate the franchise immediately and shall require a new application and a new franchise and conformance with all the requirements of this Ordinance as upon original franchising.

6.3 No franchise or any interest therein may be sold, assigned, mortgaged or otherwise transferred without the approval of the County and a finding of conformance with all requirements of this Ordinance as upon original franchising. Each franchised ambulance service, its equipment and the premises designated in the application and all records relating to its maintenance and operation as such, shall be open to inspection by the State, the County, or their designated representatives.

Section VII. Standards for Drivers and Attendants

7.1 The franchisee shall comply with all standards for drivers, medical responders and emergency medical technicians as developed by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission as required for certification of ambulance attendants and Emergency Medical

Technicians pursuant to Article 7 Chapter 131E-158 and Article 56 Chapter 143 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, and as the same may hereafter be amended, and the same are incorporated hereby in reference.

Section VIII. Standards for Vehicles and Equipment

8.1 The franchisee shall comply with Vehicle and Equipment standards as developed by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission pursuant to Article 7, Chapter 131E-157 and Article 56, Chapter 143, of the General Statutes of North Carolina, and as the same may hereafter be amended, and the same are incorporated herein by reference.

Section IX. Standards for Communications

9.1 Each ambulance must be equipped with a two-way radio licensed by the Federal Communications Commission and it must be in operative condition at all times. The radio must have a multi-channel capability. The utilized frequencies or talkgroups shall be designated by the County.

9.2 The base of operation must have at least one open telephone line. Telephone numbers must be registered with the Communications Center(s) designated by the Board of Commissioners by resolution in the County of Watauga.

Section X. Insurance and Other Security

10.1 No ambulance franchise shall be issued under this Ordinance, nor shall such franchise be valid after issuance, nor shall any ambulance be operated in the County of Watauga unless there is at all times in force and effect insurance coverage, issued by an insurance company licensed to do business in the State of North Carolina, or other security as provided for under Part (D) of this Section, for each and every ambulance owned and/or operated by or for the payment of damages which names Watauga County as an additional named insured:

(A) In the sum \$1,000,000 combined single limit coverage for injury or death of individuals in accidents resulting from any cause for which the owner of said vehicle would be liable on account of liability imposed on him by law, regardless of whether the ambulance was being driven by the owner or his agent, and, for the loss of or damage to the property of another, including personal property, under like circumstances, in sums as may be required by the State or as approved by the County of Watauga; and,

(B) Malpractice: \$1,000,000 per claim, \$1,000,000 aggregate, per employee.

Section XI. Records

11.1 Each franchisee shall maintain the following records:

(A) Patient Care Report – A Patient Care Report (PCR) that is National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) compliant along with loaded transport mileage. Deviation from this section shall be coordinated with the EMS System.

(B) Complaint Report – Shall detail all complaints received by the Franchisee and all action taken to address same.

(C) Data Sheet - To be submitted quarterly to County (by the 15th of the month following each quarter) stating the following:

- a) Number of total calls
- b) Number of emergency calls
- c) Average response time of total emergency calls
- d) Number of transporting non-emergency
- e) List of vehicles, equipment inventory and operating condition of each vehicle
- f) Copies of State inspection reports
- g) Breakdown of number of calls by time of day
- h) Number of emergency transports out-of-county
- i) Number of non-emergency transports out-of-county

(D) By the 15th of the month following the last quarter, the Franchisee shall provide an annual report summarizing and compiling the data provided in 11.1, to include copies of all complaint reports maintained pursuant to 11.1(B), above.

(E) By May 15 of each year, if County funds are provided, the Franchisee shall submit to the County Manager a budget of how they intend to spend County funds for the upcoming fiscal year.

(F) Within ninety (90) days of the end of the Franchisee's fiscal year, the County shall require the Franchisee to provide to the County a full and complete copy, including financial statements, of a certified audit conducted by a CPA in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

Section XII. Rates and Charges

12.1 Each Franchisee shall submit a schedule of rates to the County for approval at the time of franchise award. A Franchisee shall not charge more than the approved rates without express formal approval by the Board of Commissioners. A Franchisee may request rate and billing adjustments during the contract term.

12.2 No ambulance service shall attempt to collect rates on emergency calls until the patient has reached the point of destination, has received medical attention and is in a condition deemed by the physician fit to consult with the ambulance service, but such service may attempt to collect rates with family or guardian of the patient once the patient is in the process of receiving medical attention.

12.3 For calls where a person requires transportation to a non-emergency facility such as an interfacility transport, doctor's appointment, or facility discharge to home or facility, attempts to collect payment can be made before the ambulance begins its trip.

12.4 Franchisee must accept Medicare/Medicaid assignment from patients.

Section XIII. Violations

13.1 Violation of this Ordinance, or the terms of any franchise granted hereunder, shall be a misdemeanor as provided by N.C. General Statutes 14-4. Each such violation also shall subject the offender or Franchisee to a civil penalty in the amount of \$100.00 for each separate breach of the franchise or violation of this Ordinance. This civil penalty must be paid within ten (10) days after the hearing on said citation has been held as provided in Section 5.2 above. If not so paid, the County as provided by N.C. General Statutes 153A-123(c) may recover such penalty. If the civil penalty is not paid within the ten (10) days as provided for above, the County may suspend or revoke the franchise.

Section XIV. EMS Advisory Committee

14.1 The Watauga County Board of Commissioners hereby creates the Watauga County EMS Advisory Committee. This committee shall advise the County on matters related to enforcement of this Ordinance and shall develop and recommend to the County such standards of care, policies, procedures and actions which will maintain and improve the quality of EMS service for the residents of Watauga County.

Membership on the Committee will consist of the following:

- (A) Representative of Appalachian Regional Healthcare System
- (B) Representative of each municipality (4)
- (C) Representative of Appalachian State University
- (D) Representative of Watauga Rescue Squad
- (E) Representative of any Franchisees
- (F) Medical Director(s)
- (G) County Manager
- (H) County Commissioner, appointed annually in December
- (I) Fire Chief's Council Chairman or Designee
- (J) Representative(s) of Emergency Services
- (K) Representative of the First Responder Program appointed by the County Commissioners for a 2-year term in December

Section XV. Enforcement

15.1 The Watauga County Manager's Office shall be the enforcing agency for this Ordinance and any Franchise granted hereunder. Such office will:

- (A) Receive all Franchise proposals from potential providers.
- (B) Study each proposal for conformance to this Ordinance.
- (C) Recommend to the Board of Commissioners the award of the Franchise(s) to the applicant(s) submitting the most appropriate proposal(s).
- (D) Periodically inspect the premises, vehicles, equipment, rates, procedures and personnel of Franchisees to ensure compliance to this Ordinance. Prepare a compliance report once a year in conjunction with the Franchisee's annual report for presentation to the County. Arrange any other inspections that may be required.
- (E) Recommend the temporary or permanent suspension of a Franchise in the event of non-compliance with the Franchise terms or this Ordinance. Recommend the imposition of misdemeanor or civil penalties as provided.
- (F) Receive quarterly reports from Franchisee and determine their completeness for review by the County.
- (G) Receive complaints from the public, other enforcing agencies, and ambulance services regarding Franchise operations. Review the complaint with the County. Obtain corrective action with the approval of the County.
- (H) Recommend improvements to the County which will ensure better medical transportation.
- (I) Maintain all records received or generated pursuant to this Ordinance and other applicable County regulations.
- (J) Perform such of the above functions as may be requested by any municipality within the County of Watauga.

Section XVI. Miscellaneous

16.1 The County may inspect a franchisee's records, premises and equipment at any time in order to ensure compliance with this Ordinance and any franchise granted hereunder. To the extent possible, the County should conduct such inspections by appointment with the Franchisee and in the presence of their representative.

16.2 No provision within this ordinance should be construed to reduce the County's authority under 10A NCAC 13P, NCGS 153A-250, NCGS 131E Article 7, or other applicable State or Federal law or regulation.

Section XVII. Addendums to Ordinance

17.1 The Board of Commissioners of the County of Watauga may through appropriate actions amend or expand this Ordinance to include other emergency departments or agencies as deemed necessary.

Section XVIII. Effective Date

This Ordinance shall take effect on the _____ day of _____, _____.

Braxton Eggers
Chairman

ATTEST:

Madison Mathis
Clerk to the Board

A G E N D A I T E M 1 1 :

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

B. Wildcat Communications Tower Site Lease Agreement

Manager's Comments:

The County Manager will request Board approval of a Memorandum of Lease and lease agreement for the Wildcat Communications Tower Site with Blue Ridge Buffalo Partners, LLC. The lease will have a term of ten (10) years for a consideration of \$1. Upon expiration of the lease, the property will revert to the County.

Under the terms of the lease, if the County receives revenue from the rental of the communications tower, the Lessor will receive 40% of that revenue during the ten (10)-year lease term.

The Wildcat Communications Tower Site is critical to the County's overall emergency communications system. Approval of the lease will allow the County to relocate the existing Wildcat Tower, as the current property is being developed for a homesite.

Board approval is required for the Memorandum of Lease and lease agreement for the Wildcat Communications Tower Site.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

MEMORANDUM OF LEASE

COUNTY OF WATAUGA

Blue Ridge Buffalo Partners, LLC of 5014 Hollow Rock Road, Durham, NC 27707 (hereinafter called “Lessor”) hereby leases to Watauga County, a North Carolina body politic of 814 West King Street, Boone, NC 28607 (hereinafter called the “Lessee”), for a term beginning on _____, 2026 and continuing for a maximum of ten (10) years, including a conveyance of the Demised Premises at the end of the lease term to the Lessee, the following property:

Being all of the “Future E.M.S. Communication Tower Site”, consisting of 0.075 – acre tract as shown on Sheet 4 of 4 of the plate of survey entitled “Final Subdivision Plat Phase IIIA ‘Wilderness Reserve at Wildcat’ Lots 138 – 169”, dated March 3, 2025, and prepared by Judson Evans Howell, PLS L-4733 of NC Precision Surveys, PLLC, which said plat is recorded in Plat Book 30, at Pages 380-383, Watauga County, North Carolina Public Registry, and labeled, to which plan reference is hereby made for a more complete and accurate property description. This includes a right of way over the roads shown on said Plat.

The provisions set forth in a written Lease Agreement (the “Lease”) between the parties dated _____ day of _____, 2026, are hereby incorporated in this memorandum.

LESSOR:

Blue Ridge Buffalo Partners, LLC (SEAL)

By:_____

Date:_____

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF _____

I certify that the following person(s) personally appeared before me this day, each acknowledging to me that he or she voluntarily signed the foregoing document for the purpose stated therein and in the capacity indicated:

Notary Public

SEAL

My commission expires:_____

LESSEE:

Watauga County, a North Carolina
corporate and body politic chartered
by the State of North Carolina.

By: _____
Braxton Eggers,
Chairman of the Board of County
Commissioners

Attest:

Madison Mathis, Clerk to the
Board of County Commissioners

(CORPORATE SEAL)

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF _____

I, _____, a Notary Public, do hereby certify that
Madison Mathis, personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged that
she is the Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners for Watauga County, a
North Carolina body politic, and that by authority duly given, and as an act of said
body politic, and that by authority duly given, and as an act of said body politic, the
foregoing instrument was signed in its name by its Chairman to the Board of
County Commissioners, sealed with its corporate seal, and attested by herself as
clerk.

This the _____ day of _____, 2026.

Notary Public

SEAL

My commission expires: _____

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**WILDCAT COMMUNICATIONS TOWER SITE
LEASE AGREEMENT****COUNTY OF WATAUGA**

THIS LEASE AGREEMENT, made and entered into this the ____ day of _____, 2026, by and between Blue Ridge Buffalo Partners, LLC, a North Carolina Limited Liability Company, 5014 Hollow Rock Road, Durham, NC 27707, hereinafter referred to as “Lessor”, and Watauga County, a North Carolina body politic of 814 West King Street, Boone, NC 28607, hereinafter referred to as “Lessee”.

BACKGROUND STATEMENT

WHEREAS, Lessor is the owner in fee simple of a certain tract or parcel of land lying and being in Watauga County, North Carolina consisting of 0.075 as described in the Deed recorded in Record Book 2433, Page 538 and shown on the plat recorded in Plat Book 30, Pages 380-383 all of the Watauga County Public Registry;

WHEREAS, Lessor desires to lease to Lessee the Lessor’s above described property for Lessee’s location of and use of communications equipment, including towers, antennas, radios, and buildings to house accessory equipment, for the Lessee’s operations on the above described parcel.

NOW THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the premises, and the mutual covenants and conditions herein stated, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledge, the parties agree as follows:

1. **TERM:** Lessor does hereby let and lease unto the Lessee, its successors and assigns, the Demised Premises described on Exhibit A for an original Ten (10) Years beginning at the time of the execution of this document.
2. **RENT:** The rental amount to be paid by Lessee to Lessor during the lease term shall be One Dollar (\$1.00) per year payable in ANNUAL PAYMENTS DUE upon execution of this agreement, and each anniversary thereafter. The lease amount for the full term may be paid in advance at the option of the Lessee. In addition to the One Dollar (\$1.00) per year lease amount, should the Lessee realize any revenue from rental of space on the tower to any

commercial enterprise than the Lessor shall be paid 40% of said revenues monthly.

3. **TAXES:** Lessor shall be responsible for all Watauga County ad valorem taxes on the Demised Premises during the term of this lease agreement and Lessee agrees to promptly pay said taxes when due.
4. **INDEMNITY:** Lessee does hereby covenant and agree to indemnify and hold Lessor harmless from any and all liability, including attorney's fees and court costs, for injury to persons and/or property damages occurring on the leased premises during the lease period, which injuries or property damage are caused by or contributed to by Lessee, its employees, agents, business activities or assigns.
5. **CONVEYANCE:** At the end of the Lease Term, so long as the Lessee is in compliance with payment terms contained in Paragraph 2, the Lessor shall convey the Demised Premises to the Lessee in fee simple. Until said conveyance is recorded the Lessee shall be allowed to utilize the Demised Premises without charge until said conveyance is recorded.
6. **TERMINATION:** Lessee agrees to notify Lessor, in writing, by certified mail, ninety (90) days in advance of any intent to terminate the lease agreement between the parties. If Lessee abandons the Demised Premises during the lease term, any advance lease payments made to Lessor by the Lessee shall be forfeited to Lessor. In the event of a termination the Lessee shall have One Hundred and Eighty days to remove all their equipment and improvements from the Demised Premises.
7. **SUBLET:** Lessee shall have the right to sublet any space to any third party and may grant the third party access to the Demised Premises. Any commercial subletting will trigger the 40% payment in paragraph 2 of this agreement.
8. **UTILITIES:** Lessee will pay for all utilities used for the operation of its communication equipment and will install its own electric meter. Lessee will be responsible directly to the appropriate utility companies for all utilities required for Lessee's use at the Demised Premises. Lessor agrees to cooperate

with Lessee, at Lessee's expense, in its effort to obtain utilities from any location provided by the Lessor or the servicing utility.

9. ASSIGNMENT: This agreement shall be binding upon Lessor, their heir, successors and assigns, and upon Lessee, its successors, or assigns.
10. COMMENCEMENT: This lease agreement shall commence upon the date of execution of this lease agreement.
11. MEMORANDUM OF LEASE: It is stipulated and agreed that Lessee shall cause a Memorandum of Lease of this agreement to be recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Watauga County, North Carolina, after its proper execution.

LESSOR:

Blue Ridge Buffalo Partners, LLC (SEAL)

By:_____

Date:_____

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF _____

I certify that the following person(s) personally appeared before me this day, each acknowledging to me that he or she voluntarily signed the foregoing document for the purpose stated therein and in the capacity indicated:

Notary Public

SEAL

My commission expires:_____

LESSEE:

Watauga County, a North Carolina
corporate and body politic chartered
by the State of North Carolina.

By: _____
Braxton Eggers,
Chairman of the Board of County
Commissioners

Attest:

Madison Mathis, Clerk to the
Board of County Commissioners

(CORPORATE SEAL)

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF _____

I, _____, a Notary Public, do hereby certify that
Madison Mathis, personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged that
she is the Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners for Watauga County, a
North Carolina body politic, and that by authority duly given, and as an act of said
body politic, and that by authority duly given, and as an act of said body politic, the
foregoing instrument was signed in its name by its Chairman to the Board of
County Commissioners, sealed with its corporate seal, and attested by herself as
clerk.

This the _____ day of _____, 2026.

Notary Public

SEAL

My commission expires:_____

EXHIBIT A

Situate in Watauga County, North Carolina and more particularly described as follows:

PARCEL ONE:

Being all of the “Future E.M.S. Communication Tower Site”, consisting of 0.075 – acre tract as shown on Sheet 4 of 4 of the plate of survey entitled “Final Subdivision Plat Phase IIIA ‘Wilderness Reserve at Wildcat’ Lots 138 – 169”, dated March 3, 2025, and prepared by Judson Evans Howell, PLS L-4733 of NC Precision Surveys, PLLC, which said plat is recorded in Plat Book 30, at Pages 380-383, Watauga County, North Carolina Public Registry, and labeled, to which plan reference is hereby made for a more complete and accurate property description. This includes a right of way over the roads shown on said Plat.

A G E N D A I T E M 1 1 :

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

C. Budget Amendments

Manager's Comments:

Deron Geouque, County Manager/Finance Director, will review budget amendments as included in your packet. Board approval is requested.



WATAUGA COUNTY
FINANCE OFFICE

814 West King St., Suite 216, Boone, NC 28607 Phone (828) 265-8007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deron T. Geouque, County Manager
FROM: Deidre Guy, Assistant Finance Director
SUBJECT: Budget Amendments
DATE: August 11, 2026

The following budget amendment requires the approval of the Watauga County Board of Commissioners. Board approval is requested.

<u>Account #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Debit</u>	<u>Credit</u>
263255 360126	E-911 Wireless Surcharge		30,000
264330 426000	Furniture	30,000	
To recognize additional funds received from the State 911 fund.			
663740 350000	Landfill Tipping Fees		850,000
667420 469568	Contracted Services-Waste Management	850,000	
To recognize additional revenue received from tipping fees.			
103300 343120	Howard Knob Park Grant		1,663,819
104283 457002	Capital Outlay-Howard Knob Park	1,663,819	
Per Board action taken 9/17/24; to recognize receiving Howard Knob park project, no County match is required.			
213991 399101	Fund Balance Appropriation		312,000
219800 498010	Transfer to General Fund	312,000	
103980 398121	Transfer from Capital Reserve		312,000
104370 454000	Capital outlay	312,000	
Per Board action taken 8/4/26; to move funds from CIP to cover purchase of budgeted ambulance.			
213991 399101	Fund Balance Appropriation		30,000
219800 498010	Transfer to General Fund	30,000	
103980 398121	Transfer from Capital Reserve		30,000
104263 435200	Maint. & Repair-Equipment	30,000	
Per Board action taken 8/4/26; to move funds from CIP to cover emergency HVAC for administration building.			
213991 399101	Fund Balance Appropriation		2,100,000
219800 498010	Transfer to General Fund	2,100,000	
103980 398121	Transfer from Capital Reserve		2,100,000
105911 457000	Capital Outlay-Land	2,100,000	
Per Board action taken 7/21/26; to move funds from CIP to cover the purchase of additional property for Hardin Park School.			

A G E N D A I T E M 1 1 :

MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

D. Boards and Commissions

Manager's Comments:

Parks and Recreation Commission

The Parks and Recreation Commission recommends the appointment of Ms. Gabby Hukill to serve as the Town of Blowing Rock At-Large Representative on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

This is a first reading; therefore, no action is required at this time.

Workforce Development Board

The Workforce Development Board recommends the appointment of Ms. Ashli Kemo to serve as a Private Sector Member representing Watauga County. Current member Mr. JD Kern has an expiring term of June 30, 2026, and is not eligible for reappointment. Mr. Kern recommended Ms. Kemo as a potential successor.

Ms. Kemo's employment is based in Watauga County, and she is active with the Boone and Blowing Rock Chambers of Commerce. The appointment would be for a two-year term expiring June 30, 2028.

This is a first reading; therefore, no action is required at this time.

A G E N D A I T E M 1 1 :
MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

E. Announcements

Manager's Comments:

A G E N D A I T E M 1 2 :

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

A G E N D A I T E M 1 3 :

BREAK

A G E N D A I T E M 1 4 :

CLOSED SESSION

- Attorney-Client Matters per G. S. § 143-318.11(a)(3)



SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

FROM BOARD MEETING



Watauga County
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



PUBLIC COMMENT SIGN-IN

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: August 18, 2026

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC COMMENT RULES

At the April 18, 2023, Watauga County Board of Commissioners meeting, the Board amended the policy for public comment before the Board as follows:

In accordance with North Carolina General Statutes 160A-81.1, the Watauga County Board of Commissioners establishes the following policy and rules regarding Public Comment.

- The Board does hereby establish a time period of up to sixty (60) minutes, for an open forum, at the beginning of each regular meeting to hear citizen comments.
- Persons who wish to speak must register on the sign-up sheet located on the information desk outside the meeting room. Sign-up sheets will be available one hour prior to the start of each meeting.
- Speakers shall provide their name and address at the start of their comments.
- Each speaker is allocated up to three (3) minutes to speak. No public comment period shall extend beyond one (1) hour. The Chair reserves the right to reduce the time limitation for individual speakers in order to meet the one (1) hour time limit and as necessary for efficient conduct of business.
- A speaker may not share or relinquish any remaining time they have not used to another speaker and shall only be allowed to speak once during the public comment period.
- Speaker substitutions at the meeting are not allowed.
- Comments are to be directed to the Board as a whole. The forum is intended to provide the Board of Commissioners an opportunity to hear citizens. It is not intended to subject the Board to answering impromptu questions. Citizens will be expected to be civil in their language and presentation and not to engage in slander or name-calling.
- Speakers shall refrain from personal attacks and/or threats directed towards County staff, elected Board members, or members of the public. Insults, profanity, use of vulgar language or gestures, or other inappropriate behavior are not allowed.
- Speakers shall limit their comments to matters that are germane to, or within the jurisdiction of the Watauga County Board of Commissioners.
- Speakers shall address the Board with any, and all public comments. Comments, questions, jeering, or other interruptions from the audience are not allowed. Speakers shall likewise not address or respond to members of the audience.
- The Chair, or presiding officer, has the authority to enforce the Rules of Decorum. Failure to obey these Rules may result in the forfeiture of the remaining speaking time and possible criminal charges. Individuals who engage in egregious or repeated violations may be asked to leave the meeting.
- During the open forum, speakers should not discuss any of the following:
 - a. Matters which concern the candidacy of any person seeking public office, including that of the person addressing the Board.
 - b. Matters in current or anticipated litigation.
 - c. Advertising or promoting the sale of products, services, or private enterprise.
 - d. Promoting any contest or lottery.

Please **clearly** print your name. By printing your name, you **acknowledge** that you have read, understood, and agree to abide by the rules outlined above.

Please state your name before speaking.

SPEAKER LIST

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
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ADDITIONAL SIGN-UP SPACE AVAILABLE ON THE BACK.

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| 30. _____ | 50. _____ |





PUBLIC HEARING SIGN-IN

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

HEARING TOPIC: Economic Development Incentive for Rootsii, LLC

HEARING DATE: August 18, 2026

WATAUGA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC HEARING RULES

At the April 16, 2002 Watauga County Board of Commissioners meeting the Board adopted the following rules for scheduled public hearings:

- The length of comment for each speaker may be limited (2, 3, or 5 minutes) dependent on the number of speakers requesting to address the Board.
- The comment shall be restricted to the subject of the public hearing as advertised.
- The Board shall request a civil courteous manner.

Please **clearly** print your name. By printing your name, you **acknowledge** that you have read, understood, and agree to abide by the rules outlined above.

Please state your name before speaking.

1. <u>David Jackson</u>	15. _____
2. <u>Christine Hendren</u>	16. _____
3. _____	17. _____
4. _____	18. _____
5. _____	19. _____
6. _____	20. _____
7. _____	21. _____
8. _____	22. _____
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14. _____	28. _____

ADDITIONAL SIGN-UP SPACE AVAILABLE ON THE BACK.

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| 38. _____ | 49. _____ |
| 39. _____ | 50. _____ |





NORTH CAROLINA BORN.

SCIENCE DRIVEN. PLANT PERFECT.

SWEETPOTATO MILK!

Rootsii: The Future of Plant-Based Dairy is Rooted in North Carolina

Introducing the world's first truly sweetpotato-based milk.

A "third-generation" alternative of plant-based milk that solves the trade-offs of taste, nutrition, and sustainability of prior generations.



Solving Agricultural Waste and Market Decline



**\$13.23
MILLION
LOSS**

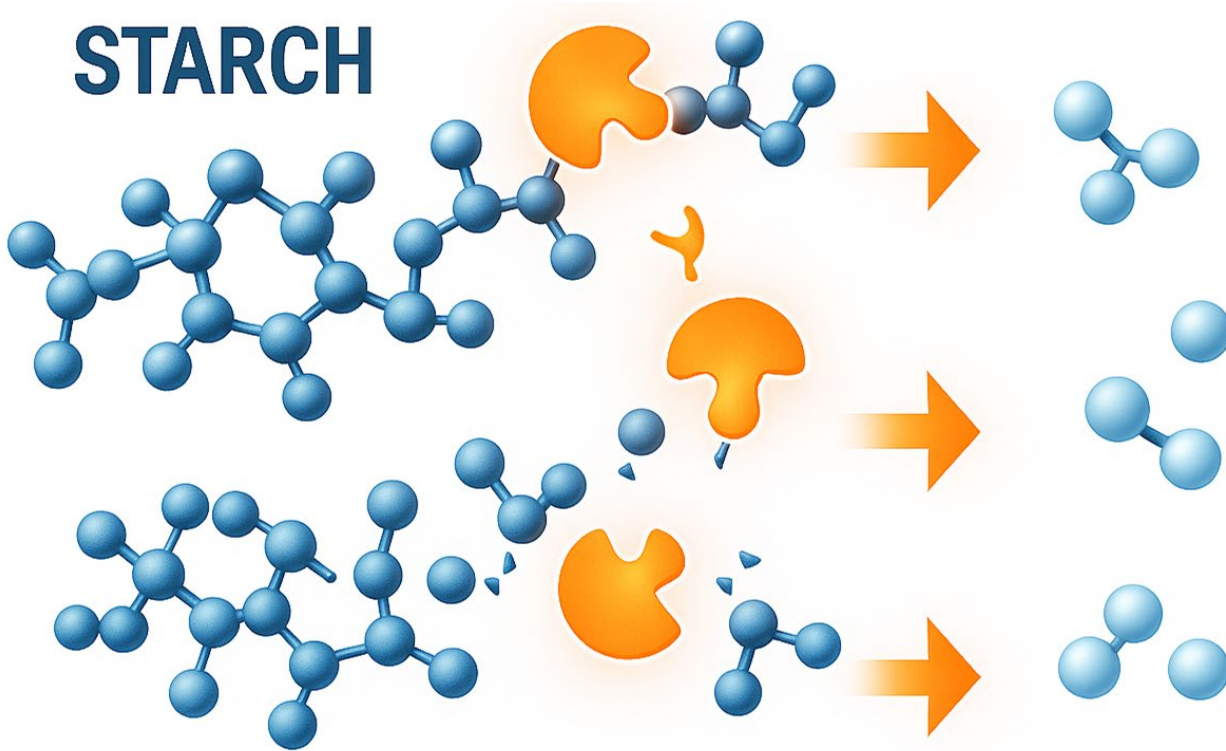
NC leads the U.S. in production (60%+) but faces declining exports and plateauing consumption.

63 million lbs of "ugly" or small sweetpotatoes are left to rot annually.

This represents a **\$13.23 million annual loss** for NC farmers.

Patent-Pending Bio-Catalytic Processing

STARCH



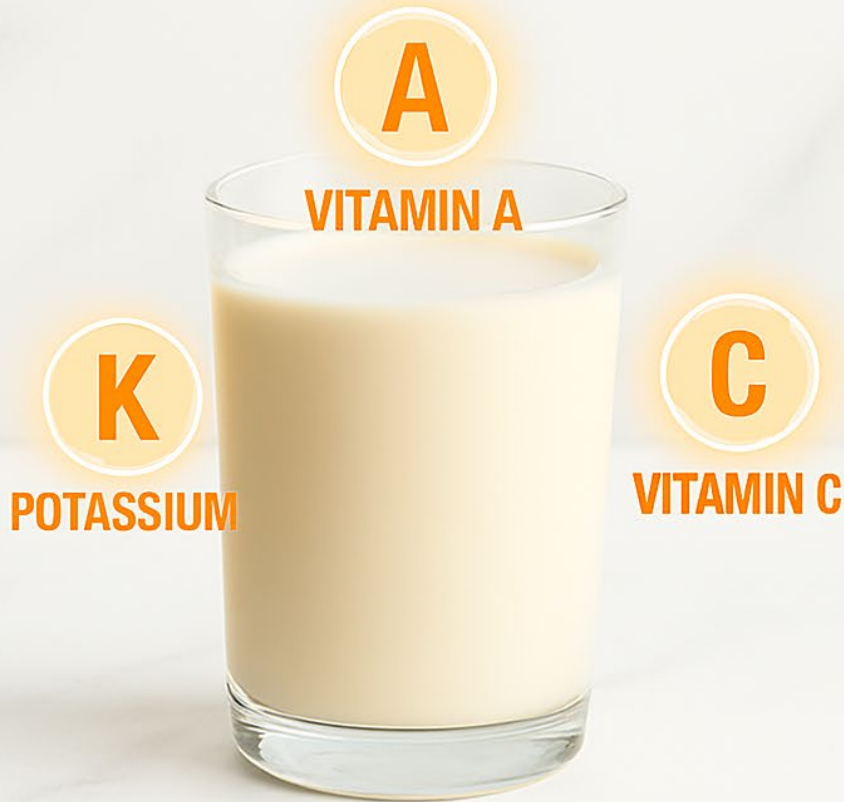
The Science: Uses alpha-amylase enzymes to break down long-chain starches.

The Result: A natural, mild sweetness and creamy liquid texture without added refined sugars.

Clean Label: Minimally processed with coconut oil, chia, and yeast protein.

Rootsii

Sweetpotato Milk



Rich in Beta-Carotene (Vitamin A), Vitamin C, Potassium, and Magnesium.

Naturally lactose-free, cholesterol-free, and allergen-friendly (no soy, nuts, or gluten).

Balanced nutrient profile compared to "thin" almond milk or "carb-heavy" oat milk.

LESS WASTE, MORE TASTE

Valorizes USDA Grade No. 2 "waste" potatoes to **support farm profitability**



ECO-IMPACT



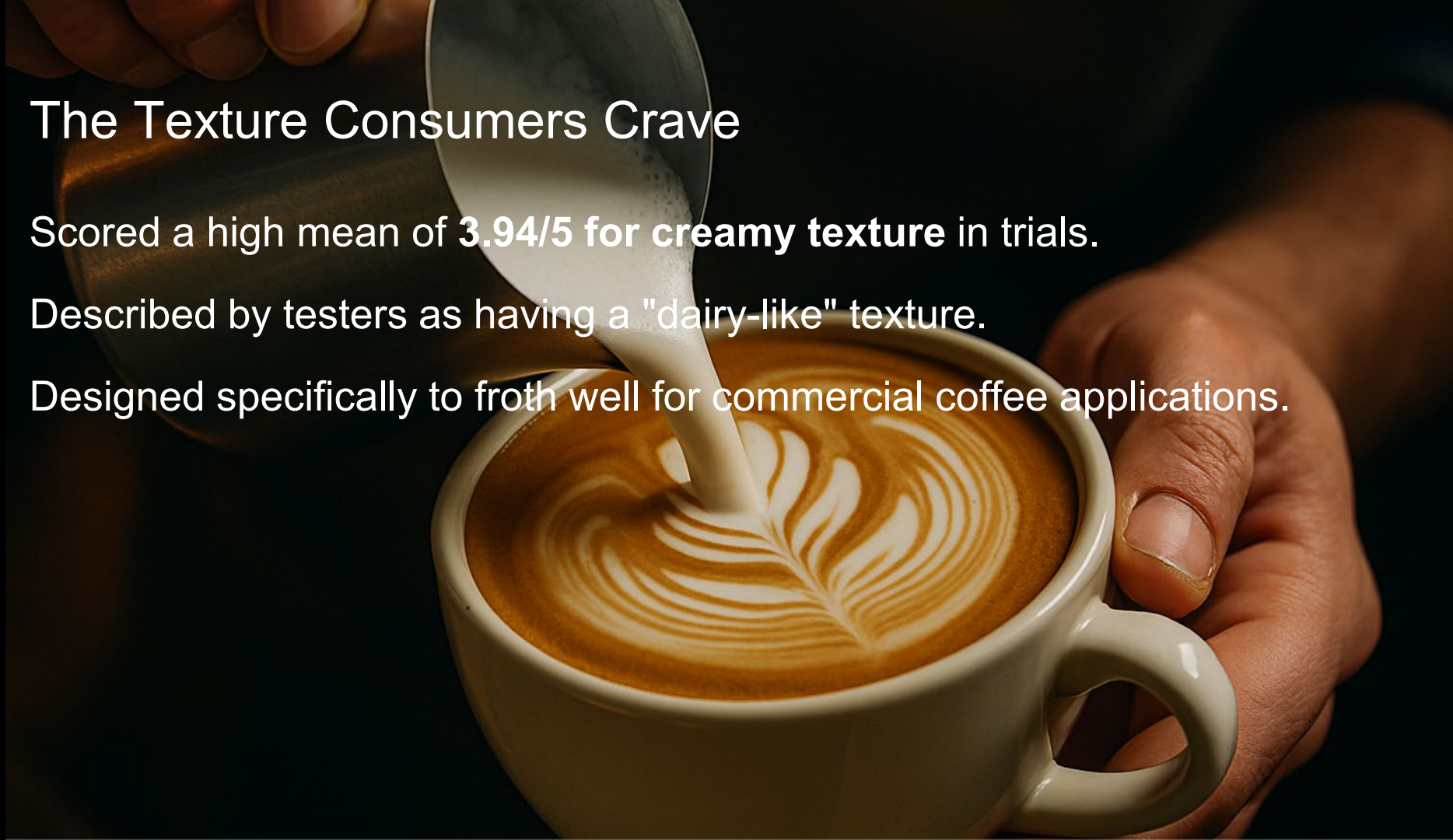
Requires **less than 1/10th the water footprint** of almond milk

The Texture Consumers Crave

Scored a high mean of **3.94/5 for creamy texture** in trials.

Described by testers as having a "dairy-like" texture.

Designed specifically to froth well for commercial coffee applications.



GLOBAL MARKET GROWTH

Plant-based milk market projected to reach \$42.6B by 2035.

Targets 68% of the global population (and 36% of Americans) with lactose intolerance.

Aims to capture share from the 40–59% of U.S. households already buying plant milks.



Strengthening the North Carolina Economy



Potential for **\$224.6 million in Gross State Product** and 621 new jobs at 5% market share.

Establishes high-value manufacturing in both Eastern and Western NC.

Partnerships with Appalachian State University and CCC&TI for workforce development.

A Bi-Regional Production Model

Eastern NC Facility: Bulk processing of raw sweetpotatoes near growers.

Western NC Facility: Conversion of bulk materials into final consumer products.

Year-Round Operation: Eastern Facility designed to process other regional crops, such as berries to support other industries (e.g., brewing), ensuring financial viability.



PROVISIONAL
PATENT



TRL 5
PILOT PLANT



MARKET
LAUNCH



PHASE 1

PHASE 2

PHASE 3

IP: Provisional Patent filed for the production method;
"Rootsii" trademark secured

Roadmap: Currently at TRL 3 (Proof of Concept) with a goal
of TRL 8 (Market Ready) by the end of year 2

Built on Scientific and Culinary Excellence

Leadership: Co-founders Brett Taubman (PhD Chemist and Director of Fermentation Sciences) and Daniel Parker (Molecular Biologist and Laboratory/Facility Manager of Fermentation Sciences)

Academic Backbone: AppState Fermentation Sciences (first of its kind in the US)

Culinary Edge: CCC&TI Culinary Arts Program for recipe and sensory development





www.rootsii.com

Local Support Requested from Watauga County EDC

- **Site identification:** help locating a suitable Boone-area property to build out the pilot plant and, subsequently, the Western NC finished-product facility.
- **Local incentives & permitting:** guidance on available business-development incentives and a streamlined path through permitting and local approvals.
- **Workforce coordination:** continued partnership with regional workforce organizations and CCC&TI / App State to build the skilled-labor pipeline as Rootsii scales from pilot to commercial production.
- **Community championing:** advocacy for the project within the community and connections to property owners, lenders, and regional economic-development resources.