Chairman Church opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Public Comment

Elizabeth McQuaid said she lived in Morganton and was the media coordinator at Gamewell Middle School. Ms. McQuaid spoke on behalf of all media coordinators in stating the benefits of a public library to the elementary, middle, and high schools as well as the community residents. She said many of the public library’s discarded books have been donated to elementary schools to increase its collection of books to engage the young readers. She talked about the benefits of e-book system to enable access of books and media through the library; and, the recent use of discarded books from the public library to upgrade a collection of books at West Caldwell High School. Ms. McQuaid expressed support of Ms. Mason’s requests for funding.

Debbie Davis said she was speaking on behalf of herself and other concerned citizens of the County through information heard and obtained from past Commission meetings. Ms. Davis expressed concern regarding issues and proposals; specifically, the changes to the Water and Maintenance Departments. Ms. Davis said there was a proposal in 2016 for a department director position of a stand-alone Maintenance Department which was opposed by three board members; however, she never heard anything about that issue until a job came open recently and was posted as an in-house vacancy for a maintenance supervisor with a salary of $31,899. She noted the 2016 proposal was a salary of $53,000 for a maintenance director position. Ms. Davis questioned why the GPS trackers bought using taxpayer funds had been removed from the County trucks and why the locks on the gates had been changed. She said Water Department staff were unable to access the maintenance department. Ms. Davis also expressed concern that unauthorized children and adults were riding in county owned vehicles and questioned the County’s liability for those situations.

Linda Lively, a retired nurse and now living in Lenoir, talked about the importance and benefits of libraries to all socioeconomic classes. She said the County’s library provided a safe place for adults to gather; a place for young children to learn and grow their social skills; and, a place for
low income individuals to access books and other materials. Ms. Lively spoke in support of necessary funding for the library.

Elsa Watts expressed her support of a new animal shelter. Ms. Watts referenced a recent evaluation of the current facility that showed it was in poor condition and did not provide sufficient space. She said it was long overdue for a new facility that would provide clean, healthy and adequate space as well as a better location to increase visitors and animal adoptions. Ms. Watts emphasized the responsibility for the County to provide adequate shelter for lost and homeless animals.

Mike McCoy talked about the great work of Lisa McLain with All Paws Animal Rescue that Ms. McLain began two years ago to help animals. Mr. McCoy said he was a retired USMC Vietnam veteran and that he volunteered at All Paws Animal Rescue. He talked of his appreciation for the rescue organization and emphasized the need for Caldwell County to have a no-kill shelter. Mr. McCoy urged Commissioners to do whatever they could to support a new animal shelter.

Alice Suddreth, a teacher in Caldwell County, spoke in support of the library and the “Libraries Lead” resolution declaring April 8-14 as National Library Week in Caldwell County. She urged Commissioners to support continued funding for the library system and talked about the benefits to the public by offering use of computers, free Wi-Fi, rental of DVDs, audio books, large print books, classes for all youth, book clubs, and special reading classes.

Ann Philyaw spoke in support of a new animal shelter and reiterated remarks previously spoken by Elsa Watts. Ms. Philyaw pointed out the fact that the current facility was outdated and the County needed to do something about it quickly. She said the County spent $30,000 in painting the Animal Shelter and some animals didn’t get three-day holds because there was not sufficient room. Ms. Philyaw noted that, according to a North Carolina health inspector, the State wanted to condemn the facility because it was not repairable. She talked about the benefits of a new shelter (cleanliness, healthier, and increased attraction of volunteers as well as greater adoption success).

Michael Barrick affirmed his support of the resolution to declare April 8-14 as Library Week. Mr. Barrick talked about a writing workshop he started last year and the recent opportunity he had to observe the library and its classes/workshops/programs that help to bring the community together. He said anything that increased civility was a good thing.

Amanda Bregel stated her support of the library not only during Library Week, April 8-14, but all fifty-two weeks of the year. Ms. Bregel extended thanks to library staff for their service and acknowledged the library was vital to the community because books had the power to teach and helped people.

Norm Thabit stated he was a self-employed sign maker, a ranked member of the United Chess Federation, and a patron of the library. Mr. Thabit provided information about his use of the library to teach chess classes and talked about the importance of the game. He said the library provided a great venue for the classes and dozens of individuals attended each week. Mr. Thabit said it was all possible because the Library Director, Lesley Mason, had agreed to let him teach the classes there. He said Caldwell County’s library was a better facility than the one in North
Myrtle Beach, SC. Mr. Thabit thanked Commissioners for their support of the library and Ms. Mason for her service.

Regular Session

Reverend Jeff Hoyle, Pastor of Mountain View Baptist Church, gave the invocation and Commissioner Branch led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Church asked if there were any additions or amendments to the March 12, 2018 agenda. The Clerk requested the addition of a consent item (Authorization to Remit Medicaid Overpayment). Commissioner LaBrose moved to approve the agenda as presented and amended by the Clerk. The motion carried unanimously.

Proclamation of Appreciation to Mike Cook

Chairman Church read the following proclamation and, upon its reading, Commissioner Willkie moved to adopt same. Commissioner Wilkie said he had the opportunity to work with Mr. Cook and extended appreciation to him for his service to citizens in Caldwell County and North Carolina. The motion carried unanimously. The Board of Commissioners formally presented the proclamation and a Caldwell County Commemorative Coin to Mr. Cook, thanking him for his service to the citizens of Caldwell County and North Carolina.

Mr. Cook thanked Commissioners and said Caldwell County had always stepped up to help the State when needed. He commended Dino DiBernardi, Kenneth Teague, and EMS staff for their assistance during many major disasters locally, across the state, and nationwide. Also, he commended them for efforts to help other agencies during times of need. Mr. Cook said he would still be working for the State as a consultant and said Caldwell County should be proud of its Emergency Management employees.

PROCLAMATION

Mike Cook Day in Caldwell County

WHEREAS, Mike Cook began his career in as a firefighter in 1977 as a volunteer with Patterson Fire Department and is currently the President of the Department’s Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, he earned an Associate Degree in Fire Science and has served forty years in emergency response service; and

WHEREAS, he began working for the City of Lenoir Fire Department in 1980 as a firefighter and, in 1985, began working for Caldwell County as its Deputy Fire Marshal; and

WHEREAS, in 1988, he became the hazmat planner for North Carolina Emergency Management and, through promotions, became the area coordinator to the branch manager in 2006; and

WHEREAS, Mike Cook is recognized for the following accomplishments during his career with North Carolina Emergency Management:

- worked on approximately thirty-two FEMA disaster declarations, including every major disaster in North Carolina since 1998;
deployed to Mississippi to serve as a team leader during Hurricane Katrina;
deployed to Lumberton, North Carolina during Hurricane Matthew;
was instrumental as a leader in the development and progress of the North Carolina All Hazards Incident Management Teams;
maintaining credentials as an Incident Commander with the Western Branch All Hazards Incident Management Team; and,
maintaining North Carolina certification as an Executive Level Emergency Manager.

WHEREAS, Mike Cook has also been honored and recognized with numerous awards including:
- Eagle Scout Award;
- Public Safety Gold Award from the NC Department of Public Safety;
- Colonel William A. Thompson Award as the NC Emergency Management Employee of the Year from the NC Emergency Management Association for his outstanding work;
- Special recognition from the Federal Bureau of Investigation for his outstanding work throughout the Democratic National Convention in 2012; and,
- Special recognition from the NC National Guard 139th Rear Tactical Operation Center for his work during Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Caldwell County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim July 3rd as Mike Cook Day in Caldwell County in appreciation of his great leadership, outstanding service, and commitment to emergency management in Caldwell County and North Carolina.

Adopted this the 12th day of March, 2018.

Randy T. Church, Chairman

Attest:

Kathy T. Greene, Clerk to the Board

Proclamation—Library Week in Caldwell County

Ms. Lesley Mason, Library Director, read the following proclamation and requested Commissioners to proclaim April 8 – 14, 2018 as Library Week in Caldwell County. She talked about activities to coincide with National Library Week and acknowledged the County Library recently named its history room in honor of former Library Director Jim McKee. Upon reading of the proclamation, Commissioner Potter moved to adopt same and it carried unanimously.

Proclamation

National Library Week 2018

WHEREAS, libraries are not just about what they have for people, but what they do for and with people;
WHEREAS, libraries have long served as trusted and treasured institutions, and library workers and librarians fuel efforts to better their communities, campuses and schools;

WHEREAS, librarians are leaders in their institutions and organizations, in their communities, in the nation and in the world;

WHEREAS, librarians continue to lead the way in leveling the playing field for all who seek information and access to technologies;

WHEREAS, libraries and librarians look beyond their traditional roles and provide transformative opportunities for education, employment, entrepreneurship, empowerment and engagement, as well new services that connect closely with patrons’ needs;

WHEREAS, libraries and librarians lead their communities in innovation, providing STEAM programing, Makerspaces and access and training for new technologies;

WHEREAS, libraries are pioneers supporting democracy and effecting social change, with a commitment to providing equitable access to information for all library users regardless of race, ethnicity, creed, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity or socio-economic status;

WHEREAS, libraries lead in working with diverse communities, including people of color, immigrants and people with disabilities, offering services and educational resources that transform communities, open minds and promote inclusion and diversity;

WHEREAS, libraries, librarians, library workers and supporters across America are celebrating National Library Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that all Caldwell County residents celebrate National Library Week, April 8-14, 2018. I encourage all residents to visit Caldwell County Public Library this week and explore what’s new at your library, and engage with your librarian. Because of you and our library leaders, Libraries Transform.

Adopted this the 12th day of March, 2018.

ATTEST:

Kathy T. Greene, Clerk to the Board  Randy T. Church, Chairman

Donation to Animal Shelter

Betsy Williams talked about the recent passing of her dog that was known to a lot of friends and people in Lenoir. Ms. Williams said she and her husband were volunteers at the County’s animal shelter and fosters for Tarheels Old English Rescues. Upon the passing of their dog, Ms. Williams said she received a $250 check from an 87-year old friend living in a rehab facility in New Hanover County, to be donated to an organization of Ms. Williams’ choice. Ms. Williams said she chose to donate it to Caldwell County’s Animal Control.
Ms. Williams thanked Commissioners for the recent study of the current animal shelter facility which she said identified it as inadequate. She urged Commissioners to build a new animal shelter and talked of the benefits a new facility would be for the County.

**Annual Funding Needs of Caldwell County Special Olympics**

Caldwell County Special Olympics Coordinator Michelle Bumgarner and her son, Nate, as well as Melanie Gunther Blake with the North Carolina Special Olympics appeared before Commissioners to request financial support. Ms. Bumgarner briefed Commissioners about the program and said her son, a student at CCC&TI’s Compass class, was an athlete from the program. She referred to a letter that included Caldwell County Special Olympics’ budget and highlighted information contained in the documents. Ms. Bumgarner said 45 after school and 420 in school athletes participated in the program which sponsored two one-day events. She noted the spring event would be soon and said all events were free.

Commissioner Potter thanked them for their work and Chairman Church said they presented their request at the right time because the County was just beginning its work on a budget for the next year.

Ms. Bumgarner thanked Commissioners for allowing her to make a presentation and for considering funding support to the organization.

**Department of Social Services Report**

DSS Director Will Wakefield updated Commissioners on HB 630 that passed in 2017 to form regionalized social services authorities across the state and, as the bill progressed, it did not mandate but encompassed a lot of other reforms including a social services work group. The work group made up of legislators, stakeholders, and county commissioners has been meeting and looking at what the State can do to assist departments on the county level. The state no longer has regional offices and all are located in Raleigh. Mr. Wakefield said the work group is thinking about reinstating that concept so that it can support the counties and next fall the work group would make recommendations for dividing the state into regions to support counties. He noted there would be contracts/agreements and corrective actions that each county would have to sign off indicating what expectations there were. Mr. Wakefield said he would forward the draft agreement to Commissioners for their review.

Jack Daulton, Economic Services and Adult Services Administrator, highlighted program numbers for February as follows:

- Food and nutrition (SNAP) 12,423 people received assistance
- Medicaid 20,454 people received assistance
- Adult protective services reports 40
- Child guardianship/cases/state wards 44
- Child support children served 3,500
- Children in subsidized childcare 669
  
  *(90% of persons on program are employed)*

Mr. Daulton said the emergency assistance and childcare programs moved into NCFAST and
that all programs would work through NCFAST by the year 2020.

He reminded everyone of the upcoming Celebration of Life on May 18th from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Mountain Grove Baptist Church (beginning with informational fair and then free lunch and entertainment).

Kim Arnette, Child Services Social Worker, provided the following statistics:
- there were 133 calls for DSS to take, review, and make decisions on 133 reports of child abuse/neglect cases using policy/statute guidelines to assess or intervene.
- 37 families (71 children in those 37 families) were investigated to determine if safety issues persisted and whether children needed to be removed and placed in foster care.
- working toward permanent placement and adoption of 188 children
- there were 34 children adopted out of foster care in 2017.

Ms. Arnette reported the child welfare program had moved into NCFAST and there were five counties that had identified and were working on issues. She said it was a complex transition (from paper base to computer base with a lot of training and shift in learning). Ms. Arnette said they were looking at others for guidance/assistance.

Ms. Arnette announced March was Social Worker Appreciation Month and asked that everyone recognize social workers employed by the County and other agencies.

Authorization to Transfer Two County Vehicles Interdepartmentally

Mr. Kiser reported Captain Rich with the Sheriff Office advised the department had a 2011 Ford Crown Victoria vehicle with 157,000 miles they wished to surplus and said Lesley Mason had requested the vehicle be transferred to the Library for use by staff traveling between the Library’s branches. He said Ms. Mason advised she was spending between $75 and $80 per month on mileage reimbursement to a single employee and she, herself, had been reimbursed more than $300 this year for using her personal vehicle traveling to meetings and conferences.

Also, he said Dino DiBernardi informed him that a 2000 Ford F350, dual wheel, crew cab truck with 124,824 miles was taken out of the department’s frontline service at the recommendation of Terry Fowler, Fowler’s Automotive. Mr. DiBernardi did an assessment and advised metallic particles were found in the oil; the motor was burning oil; there was an electrical fire in the dash associated with the emergency warning; it needed a new battery; and, there was great wear and tear placed on it due to emergency response. Mr. Kiser said the Maintenance Department requested the vehicle be transferred to their department with plans to add a dump body for their use.

Following discussion about the condition of the 2000 Ford F350 truck, Commissioner Branch moved to approve the transfer of the 2011 Ford Crown Victoria and to declare the 2000 Ford F350 truck surplus. The motion carried unanimously.

Authorization for Health Director to Lower Animal Adoption Fees Periodically

Health Director Joshua Swift requested authorization from Commissioners to lower the animal adoption fees periodically as deemed necessary or appropriate. The current fee is $75 and,
depending on the time of year and times when the shelter is at capacity, Mr. Swift said he would like authorization to lower the adoption fee to $35 in an effort to encourage citizens to adopt animals and decrease the number of animals that must be euthanized. He noted that the animals adopted out with a lower adoption fee would still get the same care including spay/neuter treatment; one-year rabies vaccination; physical examination; and, required vaccinations. He also requested the adoption fee be lowered to $35 permanently for veterans showing county-issued identification.

Chairman Church moved to approve the proposal and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Branch said he had been getting several calls regarding all the animal control officers resigning from the department and questioned the reason. Mr. Swift said the department had new leadership and that, sometimes, resulted in change which most people didn’t like. He informed Commissioners that they all left voluntarily and there were no discipline issues with any of the former officers.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes
The County Manager recommended the Board of Commissioners approve the minutes of the February 5, 2018 meeting as presented.

2. Budget Amendments
The County Manager recommended the Board of Commissioners approve the following budget amendments and authorize execution of associated documents.

   A. Scrap Tire/White Goods Disposal Fees - $30,000.00
   During the current fiscal year, scrap tire/white goods disposal fees/tax has been greater than originally budgeted and the following budget amendment is necessary to reflect the increases in the revenue and expenditure line items. This is flow-through funding; therefore, no local dollars are required.

   Increase  10.4286.318001  Scrap Tire Tax  $12,000.00
   Increase  10.4286.435400  Scrap Tire Tax  $12,000.00
   Increase  10.4286.318010  White Goods Disposal Fee  $18,000.00
   Increase  10.4386.435600  White Goods Disposal Fee  $18,000.00

   B. Cooperative Extension Service (Donated Funds) $8,250.00
   The Cooperative Extension Service has requested the use of donated funds and the following budget amendment is necessary to transfer the donated funds into an expenditure line item. No local dollars are required.

   Increase  10.4950.364006  Donations  $8,250.00
   Increase  10.4950.432900  Expenditure of Donated Funds  $8,250.00

3. Acknowledgement of 2018 Scream Half Marathon For July 21, 2018
Mr. Kiser reported that Caldwell County received a request for acknowledgement of the Scream Half Marathon Event to take place in Caldwell County. The North Carolina Department of Transportation requires its approval of such events; however, the DOT requires acknowledgement by the County of the scheduled event. The DOT requires proof of liability insurance coverage as well as operating plans. The event is scheduled for Saturday, July 21st and
will run from Jonas Ridge to Mortimer. He recommended the Board of Commissioners acknowledge the event scheduled for July 21, 2018 contingent upon NCDOT’s final approval and to authorize the County Manager to send written notification.

4. Approval of Caldwell County Schools Application for Lottery Funding
Mr. Kiser reported the school system was working on an application for use of $677,486.00 in Lottery funds for improvements to the track at West Caldwell High School. The project includes not only improvements to the track but also significant improvements to the storm drainage system. He said Commissioners were being asked to approve the request to use $677,486.00 in Lottery funds; to approve the following budget amendment; and, to adopt the project budget ordinance necessary for the project which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes (Exhibit A)

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<th>Increase</th>
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<td>Public School Lottery</td>
<td>$677,486.00</td>
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5. Approval to Extend Audit Contract with Martin Starnes & Associates
Mr. Kiser said staff had requested approval of a one-year extension to the audit contract with Martin, Starnes and Associates, CPAs, P.A. for the County’s fiscal year 2017-2018. It was noted there was a small increase in the cost for their service over last year’s cost. The base audit is $51,300 and the financial statement preparation is $7,500 for a total of $58,800. He recommended the Board of Commissioners formally approve the contract to extend the audit services contract with Martin, Starnes and Associates, CPAs, P.A. for fiscal year 2017-2018 which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes (Exhibit B).

6. Petition Application Requesting the Addition of Burkeshire Estates to NCDOT State Road Maintenance System
The County Manager informed Commissioners the County received a petition requesting the addition of Burkeshire Estates (off Calico Road) to the State road system for maintenance. He said the Board of Commissioners would need to formally approve submitting the petition to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for review and subsequent action. He recommended the Board of Commissioners approve the formal submittal of the petition requesting Burkeshire Estates be added to the State Road Maintenance System to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for their review and action.

7. Fireworks Display Permit
Mr. Kiser reported Caldwell County received a request for a permit to have a fireworks display on April 7, 2018 at Amity Creek Farms, 6088 Petra Mill Road, Granite Falls. JECO Pyrotechnics, Inc. will be conducting the fireworks display and submitted a copy of the insurance certificate. Kevin Brown advised his office would conduct the necessary inspections of the site prior to the display. Mr. Kiser recommended the Board of Commissioners grant a permit for a fireworks display by JECO Pyrotechnics for Amity Creek Farms April 7, 2018.

8. Authorization to Remit Medicaid Overpayment
Mr. Kiser reported the Health Department received an overpayment from Medicaid that the County must return and recommended the Board of Commissioners authorize the remittance of a Medicaid funding overpayment in the amount of $86,773.34 as requested.

Commissioner LaBrose moved to approve the eight items on the consent agenda as presented
and recommended by the County Manager. The motion carried unanimously.

Appointments

The Clerk reported that JCPC Coordinator Philip Toelkes had requested the appointment of Andrea Plyler, Assistant District Attorney based in Caldwell County District Court, to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

She reported the Council on Aging had requested the appointment of Felicia Burleson, Caldwell County DSS employee, to replace April Austin on its Council.

She reported the Town of Sawmills had requested the appointment of Richard Miller of Dry Ponds Road as the County’s extraterritorial jurisdiction representative through September 2019.

Commissioner Potter moved to appoint the three individuals as read by the County Clerk and the motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to conduct, Commissioner LaBrose moved to adjourn and, by unanimous vote, Chairman Church declared the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.