

Henderson County



LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE FOR COOPERATIVE ACTION “LGCCA”

Historic Courthouse | 1 Historic Courthouse Square | Hendersonville, NC 28792

Tuesday, January 21, 2025 – 3:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: City of Hendersonville: Mayor Barbara Volk
Henderson County: Chairman William Lapsley, Vice-Chair J. Michael Edney,
and Clerk to the Board Denisa Lauffer
Village of Flat Rock: Mayor Anne Coletta, Vice-Mayor Matt Toner
Town of Fletcher: Mayor Preston Blakely, Council Member Keith Reed
Town of Laurel Park: Mayor J.Carey O’Cain, Council Member Travis Bonnema
Town of Mills River: Mayor Shanon Gonce, Council Member Sandra Goode

Also Present: Henderson County – County Manager John Mitchell, Assistant County Manager Chris Todd, Financial Services Director Samantha Reynolds, Emergency Services Director Jimmy Brissie, Tax Assessor Harry Rising, County Engineer Marcus Jones, Strategic Behavioral Health Director Jodi Grabowski, and Adult Recovery Court Coordinator Daniel Conway. Flat Rock – Pat Christie, City of Hendersonville – City Manager John Connet, Fletcher Town Manager Mark Biberdorf, Mills River Town Manager Matt McKirahan, and Flat Rock Town Administrator Pat Christie

CALL TO ORDER (Henderson County Hosting)

Henderson County Board of Commissioners Chairman Lapsley called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Lapsley led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Additions/Deletions

Mayor O’Cain moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Keith Reed. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

**Approval of 2025 Meeting Schedule
Approval of Minutes – July 16, 2024**

Vice-Chair Edney moved to approve the July 16, 2024, minutes and the 2025 Meeting Schedule, seconded by Mayor Coletta. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS – None

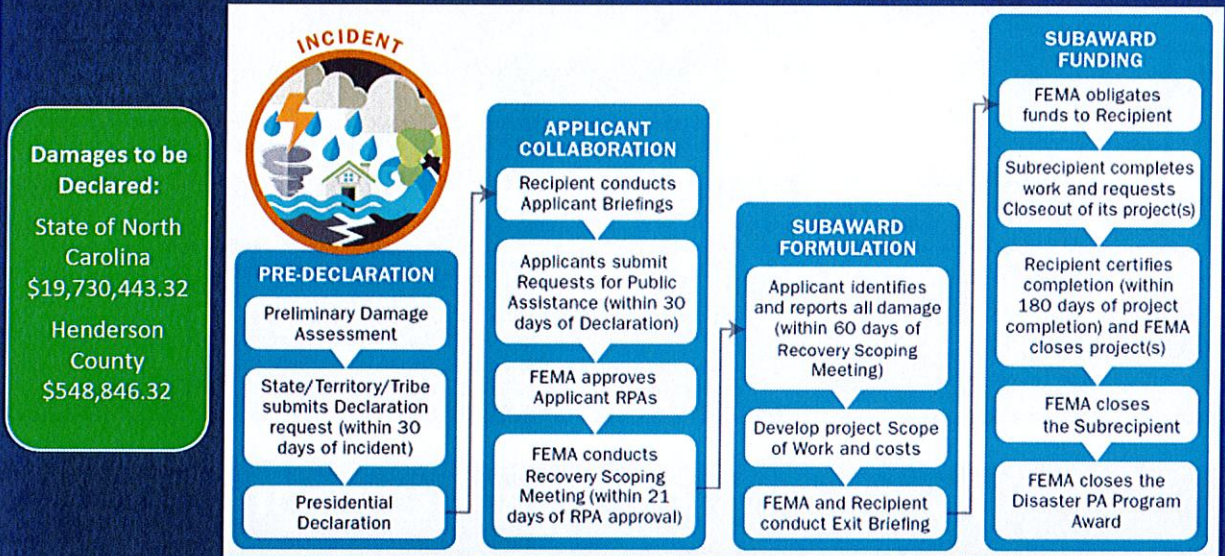
NEW BUSINESS

Hurricane Helene Update

FEMA Disaster Grants

- Individual Assistance (IA)
 - A program that provides financial and direct assistance to eligible individuals and families who have experienced a disaster. IA is intended to help survivors meet basic needs and supplement disaster recovery efforts.
- Public Assistance (PA)
 - Provides financial aid to communities after a federally declared disaster or emergency. Available to state governments, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes, and certain private non-profit organizations.
 - Emergency work: Includes debris removal and preventative measures to secure property and prevent further damage.
 - Permanent work: Includes measures to restore or replace property.
- Mitigation Grants (HMGP)
 - Grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that provides funding for long-term solutions to reduce the impact of future disasters. The grants are available to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments after a presidentially declared disaster. Homeowner grants are also available. Over \$1.7 billion in funding is expected for HMGP grants.

Typical FEMA Public Assistance Process

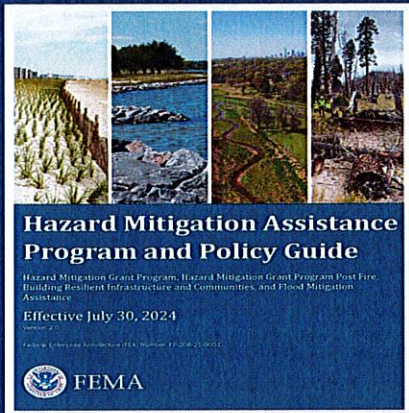


Project Review and Funding Timeline



- Currently only 13 Applicants with obligated projects:
 - **1st two PA projects submitted for Henderson County:**
 - Cat A Expedited Debris- \$20.8M
 - Cat B Cut and Toss- \$1.14M
- Geographic complexity of Helene / Milton
- Site Inspections are being scheduled for February
- Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy still has open projects that are being closed out
- COVID-19 is still being processed by FEMA

Hazard Mitigation Grants



- Application Period Open for Homeowner Hazard Mitigation Grants
- Grants will allow eligible property owners to request FEMA funding to prevent future storm losses. Both residential and commercial properties are eligible. (residential is 1st priority)
- Potential projects include: home acquisitions, structural elevations and land stabilization.
- Local Government Boards will have final approval of applications for eligible properties.

Homeowner Applications

- NCEM conducted an in-person intake at the DRC during the week of December 2nd. Over 70 families attended to learn more and complete applications. HCEM continues to receive applications in our office and at the DRC.
- Applications will be batched for submission to FEMA.
- Grant application deadline – October 2025

• Applications received by NCEM:	54
• Applications received by Henderson Co.	13

Mayor Blakely asked about the timeline for the applicants to receive FEMA funds, noting the urgency of their financial needs. Mr. Brissie explained that while the federal government’s “Help Act” was designed to speed up the process, North Carolina is implementing buyout and elevation projects under this act for the first time, so there is no prior experience to reference. Before the Help Act, the wait time for funds was 18 to 24 months, which was not helpful for residents in immediate need.

Keith Reed asked whether the program was available to all property owners or only those without loans. Brissie confirmed that all property owners could participate, and the property did not have to be in a floodplain. However, properties in floodplains were the top priority in reducing future financial loss. He added there were three priorities of properties for this program:

- Primary Residence
- Secondary Residence
- Commercial Properties (lowest priority)

Chris Todd presented the latest numbers in regard to housing.

Housing & LTRG

- Currently 183 households are checked into TSA
 - 48 households are approved for FEMA Direct Housing
 - 18 direct housing units placed
 - 17 direct housing units currently being used
 - 11 additional sites are approved and ready for occupancy
- Henderson County and the United Way of Henderson County are actively collaborating with partners and non-profits to mobilize the Henderson County Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG)

The County Engineer presented the status of debris removal in the county. He estimates debris removal will likely take over two years.

Debris Management

- Debris removal projects underway:
 - Right of Way (ROW)
 - 334,000 cubic yards collected
 - 1,500,000 cubic yards initially estimated
 - Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR)
 - Applications being accepted at the DRC
 - Waterways
 - Initial pass of Mud Creek debris collection has been approved by FEMA. Undergoing additional approvals now.

Debris Management			
Total Loads Collected		Total Citizen Debris Reports	
11k		4.6k	
<small>Last updated: 2 seconds ago</small>		<small>Last updated: 2 seconds ago</small>	
Total Volume Collected, Cubic Yards	Electronics	Large Appliances	
334.4k	196	171	
<small>Last updated: 2 seconds ago</small>	<small>Last updated: 2 seconds ago</small>	<small>Last updated: 2 seconds ago</small>	
Vegetative	C&D	Hazardous Waste	Vegetative Debris
10.7k	130	258	3.5k
<small>Last updated: 43 seconds ago</small>	<small>Last updated: 43 seconds ago</small>	<small>Last updated: 2 seconds ago</small>	<small>Last updated: 2 seconds ago</small>
Wood Chips	Commercial Veg.	Construction Debris	Household Garbage
155	2	1.3k	108
<small>Last updated: 43 seconds ago</small>	<small>Last updated: 43 seconds ago</small>	<small>Last updated: 2 seconds ago</small>	<small>Last updated: 2 seconds ago</small>
<small>Legacy data as of 11/4/24</small>			

Debris Management

- Refer all debris calls to 828-771-6670
- Or email helene-info@hcem.org

Debris Management			
Total Loads Collected		Total Citizen Debris Reports	
11k		4.6k	
<small>Last update: 2 months ago</small>		<small>Last update: 2 months ago</small>	
Total Volume Collected, Cubic Yards	Electronics	Large Appliances	
334.4k	196	171	
<small>Last update: 2 months ago</small>	<small>Last update: 2 months ago</small>	<small>Last update: 2 months ago</small>	
Vegetative	C&D	Hazardous Waste	Vegetative Debris
10.7k	130	258	3.5k
<small>Last update: 43 months ago</small>	<small>Last update: 49 months ago</small>	<small>Last update: 2 months ago</small>	<small>Last update: 2 months ago</small>
Wood Chips	Commercial Veg.	Construction Debris	Household Garbage
155	2	1.3k	108
<small>Last update: 49 months ago</small>	<small>Last update: 49 months ago</small>	<small>Last update: 2 months ago</small>	<small>Last update: 2 months ago</small>

Legacy data as of 11/4/24

Mayor Blakely asked about the criteria the debris contractor uses to determine whether debris qualifies for pick-up. Mr. Jones stated there was no appeal process for debris classified as “not storm-related.”

Sandra Goode asked if there were any other debris sites besides the one located in Mills River. Jones replied that there were now five—two in Mills River, one at Blue Ridge Community College, one on Ridge Road, and one at McAbee Road.

Tax Assessor Harry Rising presented the following information.

Henderson County Tax Administrator

Briefing to LGCCA
January 21st, 2025



2024 Municipal Collections



<u>District</u>	<u>Bill Count</u>	<u>2024 \$ Charge</u>	<u>2024 % Collected</u>
City of Hendersonville	8,898	\$ 15,342,503.99	95.70%
Downtown MSD	440	300,613.14	94.05%
7 th Ave MSD	170	44,998.72	87.84%
Town of Laurel Park	1920	2,553,401.88	96.40%
City of Saluda	19	34,287.97	100.00%
Henderson County	85,985	\$101,686,331.65	95.12%
		<u>2023 \$ Charge</u>	<u>2023 % Collected</u>
		\$ 99,148,460.67	95.52%

• Total Property Assessments by Municipality and Special Districts

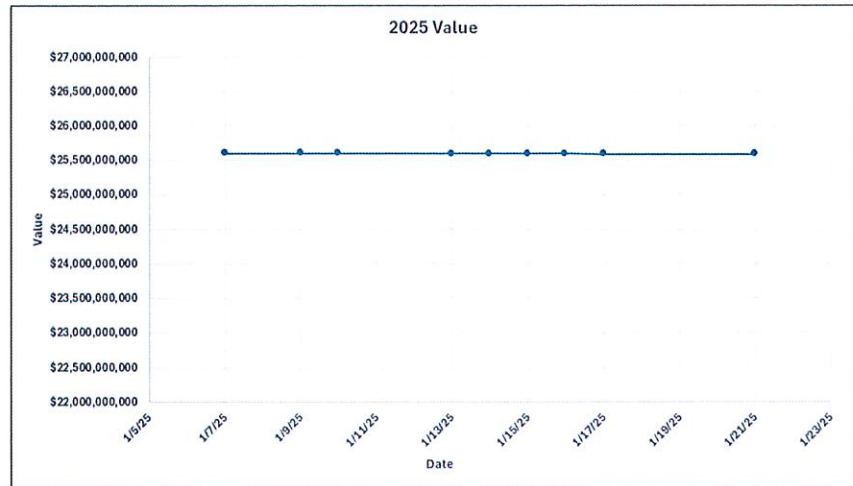


	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>% Change</u>
• Hendersonville	\$3,280,710,903	\$3,349,097,774	2.08%
• Laurel Park	\$ 698,972,403	\$ 704,696,789	0.82%
• Mills River	\$2,390,705,840	\$ 2,400,510,910	0.41%
• Flat Rock	\$1,493,982,288	\$ 1,511,426,678	1.17%
• Fletcher	\$1,884,326,800	\$1,896,129,626	0.63%
• Saluda	\$ 6,286,281	\$ 6,301,205	0.34%
• Henderson County	<u>\$25,193,261,705</u>	<u>\$25,590,491,599</u>	<u>1.58%</u>

Valuation Trend of Site Appraisals



Date	Value
1/7/25	25,601,770,409
1/9/25	25,597,786,840
1/10/25	25,597,788,371
1/13/25	25,592,529,345
1/14/25	25,592,376,993
1/15/25	25,592,776,994
1/16/25	25,590,729,563
1/17/25	25,590,491,599
1/21/25	25,587,351,341



Field Appraisal Status

As of January 17th, this was the status of appraisals on Helene-affected property:

- 1. Structures identified by FEMA assessment as damaged: 4,376
- 2. Number of parcels with damaged structures: 3,822
- 3. Parcels visited to inspect damage: 3,126 (82%)
- 4. Parcels remaining to visit: 696



Mr. Rising stated that nine field appraisers visit properties daily and hope to visit all county properties by the end of January.

Tax Appeal Dates for 2025



Completion of Helene-related valuation inspections is expected by end of January

Value Change Notices go out to taxpayers 2nd Week of February

Informal appeals begin January 2025

Board of Equalization and Review convenes April 16th, 2025; adjourns May 30th, 2025. This means formal appeals may be submitted during that time.

John Connet asked that the slides from today's meeting be shared with the municipalities.

Commissioner Edney left the meeting.

Down-zoning

Commissioner Lapsley shared that during a recent planning board meeting, the county attorney advised the planning board of a line in a recent bill passed by the General Assembly in late November that included in the State Budget Bill was a long list of items, one of which indicated that local governments that have zoning ordinances could not down-zone a particular property without the property owner's written approval. When drafting the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2024, the Board heard from the public that there were concerns about the density in areas of the county, particularly with residential development. The Board was encouraged to focus on farmland preservation, which this down-zoning could potentially impact. Lapsley says this puts the county in a "stall situation" in updating the land development code. The Board's position is to seek meetings with our legislative delegation to get their feedback for the new session of the General Assembly and see what may be done. Mr. Lapsley and John Mitchell are scheduled to meet with Representative Balkcom and Senator Moffitt to discuss. Mr. Lapsley said he would update the committee members after that meeting.

Opioid Abatement

Jodi Grabowski provided an update on the county's opioid abatement efforts, highlighting that the county would receive approximately \$1 million annually for 16 years. She emphasized the importance of ensuring program sustainability.

She discussed the Adult Recovery Court, led by Daniel Conway, which supports high-risk, high-needs individuals who would otherwise face lengthy prison sentences. The intensive program

currently has ten participants, 4 of whom are no longer involved with DSS. She shared impactful stories, including one participant that was forced into dealing drugs in seventh grade and another who has struggled with meth addiction for years but is now receiving help. Conway was also invited to join a statewide council.

She noted that “Option B” funding has been unlocked to support prevention and treatment, with all expenditures requiring Board of Commissioners approval. So far, no treatment costs have been paid out of county funds.

Additionally, the Health Navigator role at the Detention Center has evolved into a full reentry program, costing approximately \$67,000 per person annually for those who remain in the program. Funds are also being allocated to prevention programs like Camp Glow and Camp Star, funding a partial navigator position at the Children and Family Resource Center, and supporting recovery housing for both men and women.

Looking ahead to 2025, the group plans to expand the Adult Recovery Court, with interest from smaller counties in the district looking to utilize the program. Efforts will continue in collaboration with DSS to support families affected by substance abuse, including working with EMS to provide peer support. They are also exploring grants and other funding options to sustain the program.

Commissioner Lapsley acknowledged the behind-the-scenes efforts and legislative support that contributed to securing funding. He highlighted a \$30 million appropriation in the state budget through Vaya Health for an Adolescent Behavioral Facility at Pardee Hospital. The regional facility will serve more than just Henderson County, with plans to renovate an existing hospital floor for the project.

UPDATES

City of Hendersonville

Mayor Barbara Volk shared that things had been relatively quiet in town. She noted the city’s annual planning retreat was scheduled for the end of February. Additionally, City Hall will host a floodplain development workshop tomorrow at 6 p.m., covering topics such as floodplain definitions, mapping systems, and existing regulations. Everyone was encouraged to attend.

Village of Flat Rock

Mayor Anne Coletta shared that following the seating of the new council in December, noting that former Mayor Nick Weedman retired after 21 years, the town honored him by naming its assembly room the Nick Weedman Assembly Room. They also welcomed new council member Emily Whitmire.

The town was in the process of updating its floodplain ordinance when Hurricane Helene hit. Fortunately, consultant Kaitlyn Finkel from the Land of Sky Regional Council assisted in the effort. Pat Christie and Finkel assessed 35 structures, primarily along King Creek, with none sustaining over 50% substantial damage. However, the hurricane caused additional damage to

North Highland Lake Road, particularly near the culvert at King Creek, and the DOT is still developing a repair plan.

The town park also suffered damage and was closed for three weeks. A FEMA site inspection is scheduled for March to assess the impact.

Town of Fletcher

Mayor Preston Blakely shared that Fletcher began its budget season with an initial workshop in January and plans to hold another in March. The town is currently in a 12-month moratorium on new development in the floodplain. It is considering regulation changes, including limits on fill, elevation requirements, and restrictions on certain uses like schools and multi-family housing in flood zones.

Most of the town's damage from Hurricane Helene affected the park. The town is bidding out various repair projects and working with FEMA for reimbursement. Of the 137 structures inspected, 15—primarily mobile homes—sustained damage beyond the 50% threshold.

Fletcher hosted a pill drop and shred event last fall and is exploring the launch of a farmer's market in collaboration with Cooperative Extension and the nonprofit ASAP. They are working on finalizing a location, date, and time. The council unanimously appointed Amber McKinney to complete the remainder of former council member Sheila Franklin's term.

Town of Mills River

Mayor Shanon Gonce reported that things were running steadily. He introduced the new town manager, Matthew McKirahan, who was hired just before Hurricane Helene and was quickly put to the test. The town also welcomed two new council members, Brian Kimball and Jeff Moore.

Mayor Gonce suggested that the committee consider receiving a quarterly report from the Partnership for Economic Development. He believes these updates would help municipalities stay informed about ongoing efforts and identify available land for potential development, emphasizing that creating more local jobs will help keep residents in the area.

Council member Sandra Goode stated that the Mills River Park served as a distribution site after the hurricane. At one point, the park was inaccessible due to surrounding floodwaters.

The Town of Laurel Park

Mayor J. Carey O'Cain introduced new council member Travis Bonamma, owner of the Echo Mountain Inn in Laurel Park. Damage from Hurricane Helene mainly consisted of landslides, with some homes sliding off the mountain, but no fatalities were reported.


Henderson County

Commissioner Bill Lapsley stated that today's discussion would serve as Henderson County's update. He apologized for the extended meeting but emphasized the importance of informing everyone about the county's efforts for all municipalities.

REMINDER OF NEXT MEETING – April 15, 2025; Host; Town of Fletcher

ADJOURN

Commissioner Lapsley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:48 p.m., seconded by Mayor Blakely. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.



William G. Lapsley, Chairman
Henderson County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Denisa A. Lauffer, Clerk to the Board