TOWN OF RANLO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

RANLO LODGE

2000 SPENCER MOUNTAIN ROAD, RANLO, NORTH CAROLINA 28054

THURSDAY, JUNE 11TH, 2026

MINUTES

Governing Body Present

Mayor Corey Creech

Mayor Pro-Tem Robin Conner

Commissioner Effie Locklear

Commissioner Schivette Hill

Commissioner Ronnie Laws

Commissioner Doug Moore

Staff Present

Town Manager	Charlie Hansen
Police Chief	Jimmy Lunsford
Public Works Director	Charles Harper
Finance Director	Reagan Day

I. Call to Order and Invocation

Mayor Creech called the Regular Meeting of the Board to order on Thursday, June 11th, 2026, at 7:00 PM at the Ranlo Lodge. Mayor Creech then led the invocation.

II. Roll Call

The Town Clerk conducted the roll call. All Present.

III. Adoption of the June 11th, Agenda

Commissioner Moore motioned to amend the agenda to add two items before item 11 on the agenda which includes consideration of Condemnation Resolution and Committee updates under new business section. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Moore motion to adopt the amended agenda. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Swearing in of Officers: Ashley Frady, Alicia Watkins, K-9 Goose

The Mayor recognized the Town Manager for swearing in of Officers Ashley Frady, Alicia Watkins, and K-9 Goose. The ceremony was conducted as part of the opening proceedings.

V.Juneteenth Proclamation

Tasha White took a moment to thank the Town of Ranlo and everyone involved for the opportunity to have the kickoff of the Juneteenth celebration in Ranlo. Mayor Corey Creech presented the Juneteenth Proclamation on behave of the Town of Ranlo.

VI. Comments from Attendees

Levi Melvin- 210 Ranlo Ave

Raised concerns about the new billing portal, specifically regarding fees charged when paying online. The Town Manager acknowledged that the transition to the new website and billing software had been difficult for both staff and residents, describing it candidly as "a disaster." He clarified that if residents set up an ACH bank draft directly through Town Hall, there would be no associated fee, as opposed to the credit card autopay option available through the new online portal. He offered to assist the resident in setting up a fee-free bank draft. The resident expressed frustration, noting that other utilities, such as gas and electricity, do not charge fees for online payments. The Town Manager acknowledged the valid concern and indicated that the transition should be substantially completed within the following month. He also confirmed that the Town now has a debit card reader at Town Hall.

Mr. Melvin inquired about garbage fees regarding trash cans and what the funds were used for. The Town Manager further clarified that garbage revenue, approximately $386,000 per year, goes directly to offsetting the sanitation department for items such as sanitation staffing costs and garbage disposal, and that the Town actually operates that service at a loss, as it does not recover full costs through the fee.

Drew Horine-1616 Allegheny Drive

Mr. Horine who had previously raised concerns about the system at a prior meeting, offered a contrasting perspective, commending the Town on the billing transition. He reported that he was able to successfully set up autopay through the new portal and found the system easy to navigate. He noted, however, that documentation on how to avoid the online payment fee was not clearly visible and suggested the Town improve transparency around that option. The Town Manager responded that the plan was to route autopay to a bank account rather than a credit card to eliminate the fee, which would resolve the concern going forward. He also noted that the Town waived all disconnect and late fees during the transition month.

Willie Mae Dolford- 3307 Mitchem Road

Raised concerns related to road conditions and traffic safety on Mitchem Road. She expressed the need for speedbumps and how bad people speed. Mailboxes are constantly being hit. Residents are scared to let children play in front yards because of it. The Mayor acknowledged the concerns and indicated they would be in communication to the North Carolina Department of Transportation as it is their Road not the Town of Ranlo.

VII. Presentation from Dennis Smith: Rollback Jack

Reverend Dennis Smith presented a proposed business partnership between his organization and the Town of Ranlo called "Rollback Jack." The concept involves deploying a truck to follow the Town's existing garbage truck along its routes. Workers would pull trash cans to the curb before collection and return them to residents' properties afterwards. Service described as both a convenience and a community benefit, particularly for senior residents and others who find it difficult to handle their trash cans.

Reverend Smith explained that the service would also include optional trash can washing for a monthly fee of $5.00. He noted that regular washing of plastic trash cans can extend their useful life from approximately 7 years to 12 years, potentially saving the Town $30,000 to $55,000 in replacement costs. He further outlined a revenue-sharing model in which 25% of proceeds would be returned to the Town, with the potential to generate approximately $82,000 per year for the Town once participation reached 25% of residents which projected to occur after the sixth month of operation. He acknowledged that uptake would take time and that he had secured an investor to sustain the business through that period. Reverend Smith emphasized the service-oriented mission behind the enterprise, connecting it to his church's values and its goal of raising funds to repair a building damaged when a tree fell on the structure two years prior. He stated clearly that Rollback Jack would operate regardless of whether the Town formally partnered with them, but that the partnership would allow for billing to be added to residents' existing water bills, which he believed would make participation more convenient.

Commissioners raised several questions and concerns. Commissioner Locklear expressed sympathy for the concept but raised concerns about the financial burden on senior residents living on fixed incomes, noting that even $5.00 per month can represent the cost of a prescription. Reverend Smith responded that the rollback service itself would be provided free of charge to seniors, and that only the washing service would carry the $5.00 fee. He further indicated a willingness to work with the Town's existing list of residents already receiving complimentary services. Commissioner Moore asked the Town Attorney if this was even a possibility for the Town to consider from a legal standpoint. The Town Attorney raised substantive legal and structural concerns, noting that the Town cannot simply commingle with a private business arrangement with its billing infrastructure without careful structuring. He stated that the arrangement would need to be clearly defined either as a Town-contracted service meaning the Town takes on the liability and administrative responsibility or as a fully independent private enterprise that the Town is merely aware of and provides some logistical coordination for. He cautioned that allowing a private entity to operate on private property under a quasi-Town arrangement creates liability exposure. Reverend Smith confirmed that a draft contract had been included in the board's packet and that the business was capable of handling its own billing independently if the Town preferred not to include it on the water bill. The board expressed appreciation for the presentation and its spirit of community service and agreed to table the matter pending review by the Town Attorney.

Old Business:

VIII. Adoption of the May 14th, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes of the Board

Commissioner Moore made a motion to adopt the regular meeting minutes Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Budget Discussion: Mayor Pro-Tem Budget Consideration

Mayor Pro-Tem Robin Connor led a discussion regarding the compensation paid to the Mayor and Commissioners for their service on the Board. The Mayor Pro-Tem expressed the view that increasing board compensation could help attract more qualified candidates for elected office in future elections, drawing a parallel to how competitive compensation works in the private sector and in recruiting for other public positions. She noted that compensation had previously been higher before being reduced during a period when the Town was in financial difficulty.

The current compensation amount was discussed, though the precise historical figures were not recalled with certainty by all board members. Commissioner Hill asked whether it would be feasible to implement a gradual, tiered increase suggesting an incremental approach of raising compensation by $100 per year until prior levels were restored.

After discussion, Commissioner Hill made a motion to set board compensation at $400. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The Motion Failed with 4 opposing votes from Mayor Pro-Tem Conner, Commissioner Moore, Commissioner Laws, and Commissioner Locklear.

Public Hearing:

X. Public Hearing for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

Commissioner Locklear made a motion to enter into Public Hearing for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget. Commissioner Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Mayor noted that the proposed budget had been made publicly available at Town Hall and published as broadly as possible. The Town Manager noted it had been submitted to the newspaper. No members of the public came forward to speak during the public hearing period. The Mayor then called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Laws made a motion to close the public hearing for the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget. Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

XI. Committee Updates

Ranlo Resource Network — Sherdina Stepney

Sherdina Stepney, chair of the Ranlo Resource Network Committee, was absent and presented a reference paper to the Board of Commissioners with updates on the Committee. Commissioner Hill wanted to remind residents about the Summer feeding program for Kids.

Ranlo Experience Committee — Drew Horine

Drew Horine, chairperson of the Ranlo Experience Committee, reported that the May 15th Middletown Night event exceeded expectations, having been organized within hours of the Board approving an additional $5,000 allocation at the prior night's meeting. The committee was commended for pulling together a full event on short notice, including a musical act that was contacted the same evening and came out the following day. The Town's social media team published a recap of the event, helping to build momentum for the summer schedule.

Looking ahead, Horine noted that the June 19th Middletown Night would coincide with Juneteenth and would feature a DJ, inflatables, and a Juneteenth-themed celebration. He emphasized that all events are free and open to the public, with the only costs being for food truck vendors and merchandise vendors. For July 17th, fireworks had been secured, along with plans for live music, inflatables, food trucks, and additional vendors. The August 21st event was also in planning. He noted that the longer lead times now available to the committee were already making a meaningful difference in the quality of event planning and coordination. The Experience Committee meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month. Commissioner Locklear praised the musical act from the May event, noting she had genuinely enjoyed the performance.

Ranlo Public Safety Partnership — Darryl Hayes

Darryl Hayes reported on behalf of the Ranlo Public Safety Partnership Committee. He presented a proposal to establish the Ranlo Police Foundation as a formal nonprofit entity. Hayes submitted a three-page report to the Board outlining the foundation's structure and purpose. He noted that the current Public Safety Partnership Committee had struggled with quorum issues often only himself, one police officer, and occasionally one other member were attending meetings making it difficult to advance the committee's work. Hayes proposed formally dissolving the committee and redirecting its work through the foundation model, pointing to the example of foundations established by other law enforcement agencies that had successfully attracted business professionals and community partners.

The Town Manager offered a note of practical caution, observing that the Town's Finance Director could not simultaneously manage the Town's finances and serve as a part-time nonprofit administrator, filing Form 990s and managing the foundation's books. He expressed willingness to support the foundation in getting established but noted that capacity constraints must be acknowledged.

Commissioner Moore made a motion for the Public Safety Committee to stay the same and work towards becoming a foundation. Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Mayor encouraged careful consideration of the implications, particularly regarding access to Town resources such as grant support. After discussion, the matter was referred for further deliberation.

XII. Consideration of Condemnation Resolution

The Town Attorney advised the board that this is a Condemnation Resolution that needs to be passed to move forward with the South Ranlo Waterline Project. Commissioner Moore made a motion to adopt the Condemnation Resolution. Mayor pro-tem Conner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Consideration and Approval of the FY2026-2027 Budget

Town Manager Charlie presented an overview of the proposed Fiscal Year 2026–2027 budget. He noted that the budget is balanced, as required by law, and that because of the Town's demonstrated financial stewardship, it had been submitted to the Local Government Commission (LGC) for review prior to adoption. The LGC responded positively, characterizing the budget as strong. The fee schedule included a 5 percent increase to water and sewer rates, consistent with a decision the Board had made prior, to take effect July 1st as a pass-through to the Town's water and sewer provider, which had also raised its rates.

The Town Manager also distributed a supplemental document outlining potential one-time fund balance appropriation projects for the Board's consideration. He emphasized that these items were separate from the general operating budget and could be approved at any point throughout the fiscal year. The projects discussed included:

- **Employee Policy Manual Overhaul and Evaluation System:** A quote from Centralina Council of Governments ranging from $13,000 to $17,000 to comprehensively update the Town's employee policy manual and create an employee evaluation process. The Mayor expressed strong support for this initiative, stating that managing by policies and procedures rather than individuals had been central to his management philosophy throughout his career, and that well-defined policies would protect the Town from the kinds of personnel issues it had faced previously.
- **Swing Sets at Fulbright Wagner Park:** A one-time fund allocation to install swings, including ADA-accessible and toddler options, with appropriate surfacing and ramp access, in response to significant feedback from residents particularly parents of young children.
- **Garden Park Renovations:** An estimated $45,000 for new asphalt, new backboards (potentially branded with the Town's mountain logo), and general improvements to Garden Park.
- **Shade Structures at Fulbright Wagner Park:** An estimated $50,000 placeholder to explore shade options for the splash pad and playground areas, where residents had reported that excessive heat limited use of the facilities. The Town Manager referenced shade installations at Veterans Park in downtown Cramerton as a point of reference. It was also noted that any shade project should incorporate a picnic area and be planned with the park's long-term development in mind.
- **Ranlo Experience Committee Funding:** An additional $30,000 per year requested by the committee after the proposed budget had already been submitted.
- **Ranlo Resource Network:** Approximately $8,000 to help establish the network.
- **Public Safety Committee:** The Town Manager indicated he had held off on including a line item for the Public Safety Partnership Committee pending the outcome of the discussion about forming a foundation (addressed under Item 19).

The Board was not asked to act on the supplemental list at this meeting. The Town Manager indicated he would return with more precise quotes and figures, particularly for the swing and shade projects, and that any approvals would be addressed at a future meeting.

Motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Budget was made by Commissioner Moore. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moore then made a motion to allocate $200 to the public safety committee. Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XIV. Budget Amendment 2526.23

The Town Manager explained that Budget Amendment 2526.23 addressed adjustments to the General Fund to reflect decisions made by the Board during the current fiscal year. Line items included administration costs associated with the design of the new Town Hall (not included in the original budget), recreation adjustments, public works costs related to a new position and insurance, police expenses related to vehicle payoffs, and costs associated with attendance at City Vision. Commissioner Moore made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 2526.23. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XV. Budget Amendment 2526.24

Budget Amendment 2526.24 addressed adjustments to the Powell Bill Fund, specifically related to the purchase of new public works vehicles approved at a prior meeting. Commissioner Laws made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 2526.24. Commissioner Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XVI. Presentation of Monthly Financial Report

The Mayor reviewed the monthly financial report and noted that the Town showed surpluses across departments, including administration, public works, sanitation, and others. He noted the Town was 91.76 percent through the fiscal year with approximately 8.24 percent of the year remaining and was tracking favorably in all areas. The Town Manager noted that the full end-of-year financial report would be presented by the Finance Director at the July meeting.

XVIL. Consideration of Entering Annual Audit Contract with Eddie Carrick

The Mayor introduced the item for consideration of renewing the annual audit contract with Eddie Carrick, the Town's independent finance auditor. Commissioner Moore made a motion to approve entering into the annual audit contract with Eddie Carrick. Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XVIIL. Resolution Opposing State Legislation Limiting Property Tax Threatening Public Services

The Mayor read the full text of a resolution opposing proposed state legislation that would impose limits on local property tax authority. He explained that the resolution had been adopted by all other municipalities in Gaston County and that the Town was being asked to join in that collective position.

The resolution stated that local governments in North Carolina rely primarily on property tax revenue as their most stable funding source for essential services, including police, garbage collection, parks and recreation, and street maintenance. It argued that the proposed constitutional amendment, which would impose levy limits and require voter approval to exceed those limits, would severely restrict municipalities' ability to maintain services—particularly in communities experiencing population growth. The resolution further argued that the amendment was legally unnecessary given existing statutes already governing how property values are assessed and maximum tax rates are set, and characterized the proposed amendment as politically motivated rather than sound public policy.

The Mayor stated candidly that while he understood the importance of the position and the fact that all other municipalities in Gaston County had signed on, he wanted the Board to take additional time to review the resolution independently before taking a formal vote. He indicated his intent to discuss the matter further with each commissioner and revisit it at a future meeting. No vote was taken.

Other Business:

XIX. Town Manager's Report

Fire Department Report: Commissioner Moore spoke on behalf of the Ranlo Fire Department outlining the number and types of calls the department ran in the month of May.

Police Department Report: Police Chief Lunsford gave report on calls ran for the month of May. He also wanted to give a special thanks to Holbrook Middle School for allowing them to have active shooter training last month.

Public Works Report: The public works director provided input about several different items

> **Utility Billing System** stating the delay in water bills was attributed to a communication breakdown between the new billing software and the Town's AMI (Automated Meter Infrastructure) system. Staff were working to resolve the integration issue and expected it to be corrected within the following week.
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> **New Vehicles**: The Town Manager thanked the Board for approving the purchase of new public works vehicles. He noted that while the originally selected trucks were sold before the Town could complete the purchase, the replacement vehicles were larger and came at a lower price and a favorable outcome.
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> **Stage 2 Drought Restrictions**: Catawba Wateree has designated the region as being in a Stage 2 drought, meaning water restrictions remain in effect. He acknowledged widespread public desire to open the splash pad but stated that the Town's water provider

is in an enforcement posture and that noncompliance could result in enforcement action against the Town. Despite recent rainfall, the drought conditions had developed over 18 months and could not be resolved quickly. The Catawba River Water System Governance Board, an 18-member body including multiple municipalities, Duke Energy, and state officials, had reviewed the situation at its June 2nd meeting and voted to maintain all current restrictions.

XVII. Comments from the Mayor

The Mayor offered a forward-looking overview of the Town's trajectory. He highlighted several significant developments on the horizon, including the upcoming repaving of Town roads, the anticipated start of construction on a new Town Hall by the end of the year, and a planned second phase that would include retail shops adjacent to the Town Hall facility. He expressed confidence that the improved infrastructure and appearance of Ranlo would attract businesses to the area and noted that the incoming sidewalk improvements along the main corridor would further enhance the Town's appeal. He concluded by encouraging residents to watch the Town's continued growth and development in the coming year.

XVIII. Comments from the Board

Commissioner Moore made a motion to pay off the Police Departments body cameras totaling around $39,000 notating that the pay off quote would be under this amount due to saving on interest. Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro-Tem Conner offered congratulations to all Gaston County Class of 2026 graduates, with particular recognition extended to the graduates of Warlick Academy, located in Ranlo. She expressed regret at being unable to attend the graduation ceremony in person.

Commissioner Locklear wanted to let everyone know how pleased she was with the event committee at the May Milltown Night in which focused on the senior citizens.

XIX. Adjournment

Commissioner Moore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

ATTESTED TO:

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Mayor Corey Creech