

TOWN OF RANLO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MONTHLY MEETING

RANLO TOWN HALL

1825 SPENCER MOUNTAIN ROAD, RANLO, NORTH CAROLINA 28054

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11TH, 2025

MINUTES

Governing Body Present

Mayor Lynn Black

Mayor Pro-Tem Doug Moore

Commissioner Ronnie Laws

Commissioner Effie Locklear

Commissioner Wade Morton

Commissioner Robin Conner

Mayor-Elect Cory Creech

Mayor-Elect Schivette Hill

Staff Present

Town Manager Charlie Hansen

Police Chief Jimmy Lunsford

Public Works Director Charles Harper

Finance Director Reagan Day

Lawyer Nick Tosco

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Mayor Black led the invocation, during which he expressed gratitude for his 8 years of service as mayor, acknowledged the incoming mayor and new board members, and prayed for unity in the town:

"Dear God, our father in heaven, we are grateful and thankful for the opportunity to be here tonight. As I ended my mayorship tonight and then we bring on a new mayor, we do thank you for the interest that we have in our community to serve our town. We've inducted 3 new members to our board, and we do thank you for that. We are giving thanks for your blessings upon me as served as mayor for 8 years. I thank you for the way you blessed our town and the way you blessed me. It's my desire always to keep the town unified and not to bring any disgrace upon the town. Try to keep the town out of the news. I know a lot of times I have been pointed out and accused falsely, but I know I love you, and I do think that all men are created equal in the sight of God. Amen. And I am so sorry, Lord, that I paused in my speech last month. I did not mean any harm to any of our citizens. You know me, Lord. I love everybody, and my character vouches for that. I do pray for unity of our town, Lord, and I pray for peace and love to happen in our town, not division. I pray against bad politics, Lord. We are a town, Lord. We are a community. We live with each other. We see each other on a daily basis, Lord. So let us unify. I pray that Cory will be able to do that as he comes and takes the reins of the mayor. God bless him in doing that and helping us to be the town you would have us to be. And I pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

II. Roll Call

The Town Clerk conducted the roll call. All the Commissioners were present.

III. Adoption of the December 11th, Agenda

Mayor Lynn Black called for a motion to adopt the agenda for December meeting.

Commissioner Laws motioned to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 5-0 vote.

IV. Comments from Attendees

Diana Graham- VP of NAACP Gastonia Branch 5394b.

"Evening, mayor and commissioner. My name is Diana Graham, vice president of the NAACP Gastonia branch 53 94 b. Our mission is to advocate for political, educational, social, and economic equality of all individuals while working to eliminate racial, hatred,

and discrimination. On this historic evening, I extend my congratulations to the incoming mayor, Corey Creech, on his momentous victory. I look forward to seeing the progress the people of Ranlo will achieve. However, I must address the elephant in the room. Mayor Black's remarks about a superior race. While some may question, why is this still a topic of discussion? The reality is racism, whether present, past, or future, remains unjust and unacceptable. When systematic racism emerges threatening to drag us back to a dark chapter in our history, we must call it what it is. Wrong, harmful, and unacceptable. Words matter. And silence for fear in the face of such behavior amounts to complicity and injustice. The people of Ranlo deserve that. As a leader, you are entrusted to serve all constituents equitably, not to promote racist ideology, but to uplift the community. My hope for Ranlo is one of courage, healing, respect, accountability, and progress grounded in truth and justice for all. As Nelson Mandela once said, my dream would be a multicultural society, one that is diverse and where every man, woman, and child are created equally. I dream of a world where all people of all races work together in harmony. That Mayor black is what constitutes a superior moral standard. We are all children of God. According to Genesis 1:27, so God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created them. Man, and female, he created them. Nowhere in the world does it say he created a superior race, only mankind. The NAACP looks forward to supporting Mayor Cory Creech, the city government, and the people of Ranlo. Thank you."

Mayor Black responded to Ms. Graham, "superior race I said in my speech was the human race, the only race. I didn't say the white race or anything like that. I don't believe but that there is only one race and that's the human race and I said that in my speech I don't know how you got it turned around so badly, I'm sorry."

Sean Bates, President of Gastonia NAACP:

"Good evening. I'm Sean Bates. I'm the president of Gastonia NAACP. So, we'll start off right there. Nobody thought there was any other race running. There's only a human race running. So, to say the superior race means that you knew exactly what you were saying, so don't try and cover it up right now. Everybody here knows what you meant. You know what you meant. That's why you tried to hurry up and change it. So please don't try and play us a stupid right now. We are trying to build a community and heal from this. Okay? Now we do wanna congratulate Corey Creech of course, first black Mayor for Ranlo. We are here to work with you. We are here to support you. You do not have to accept the things that were said like that and let it just pass over. You have a whole community here for you. We will stand strong. That's how you got these votes. These votes mean that we are here for you. The NAACP fights for against all injustice, and we find it very hard and disheartening to not even hear an apology, to not hear an apology to the people that sit right there next to you, the ones that have to sit there and act like they didn't even feel

anything that happened. That's right. So, I'm not gonna follow everything in my speech for tonight because the people here are letting it be known. So, we will continue to show up. We will make sure you are protected. That's all."

Commissioner Laws stated, "this man has not got a racist bone. Now if I saw that are you gonna come and say that I'm racist. I wanna tell you about this lady right here, I went to her and asked her to be on the board. I'm no racist, he's no racist. You're just piling on, the man said he was sorry it should end right there and let the Town go about its business

Commissioner Conner stated, "Ronnie Laws I do appreciate when you all appointed me to the board, that meant a lot. But for me, since I have been sitting with Mayor Black you have a way of saying things wrong. You've questioned me about how many people/family members I had in prison, you ask why there were not more white people in the NBA basketball team oppose to black people. Why do I go into businesses and its all-black people now. Do you remember that conversation? In front of our former Town Manager Jonathan Blanton. Yes, we had that conversation".

Mayor Black stated he did not remember the conversation

Commissioner Conner stated, "You do. With that being said let's get this night over because when its all said and done thank you for your eight years but goodbye".

Mayor Black followed with "I'm so racist? Let me tell you how bad racist I am"

Commissioner Conner, "nobody called you racist it's the words that come out of your mouth.

Mayor Black "Did I not give \$60 for your campaign?"

Commissioner Conner, "that was not personally for me that was for the group and you wanted your signs out there. That was not for me. You did not support me and that was not the purpose and you know it"

Brian Wilson-Former Employee

"Good evening, God bless all of you. Speaking of campaign of \$60. I gave you a stack of papers of the terminated letter I addressed at the last meeting that it says I used political influence. This man here accused me of mingling the election results and made some very racist comments during the process. I can't say them but I will tell you right now they said it. But I want to work through it because it was very disappointing that you lost. Here is where I'm at, the seven points I read to you at the last meeting are still pending but they got to a superior disadvantage. I still want an answer on what I done to mingle the

elections and I still wanna know what you did about the inmates smoking pot in the public works building. No one has stepped forward to ask me any questions and I'm still waiting. I'm in eviction status. I contacted a lawyer to get me some advice. Once I go through the process tomorrow standing before a Gaston County Judge for the first time ever answering for the delinquency from the stop of income afflicted by this man of wrong doings and wrongful termination with fowl unfairness of policies of discharge. I didn't even get the privilege to stand before human resources. There is a conflict of interest. I deserved that and denied it, which was unlawful. I begged the manager in person to resolve it and you haven't made no effort. One day I'm going to be one of your homeless. I promised your sheriff I would comply with all your laws, because I'm going to stay and I'm going to be among your homeless seeking justice until I can rebuild my dream home in this Town. I served it on two occasions and have been held high. I carried this lodge with every blood sweat and tear and got it soiled by inmates because they viewed me as a rat. I am right now unrepresented employment wise but a process must take place before I can obtain an attorney that I paid \$150. The damage is going to occur to \$21,648 and a loss of residents not including \$300 that I have already spent internally on advice that I have received for. They will be submitted as part of my claim. I beg you once again to reconsider please to just turn back because I'll work for him as long as I'm held accountable for your policies not whether or not you won or if you can keep inmates from smoking pot in the building. Why would I lie on my brothers? We can get through this whether it's the same seat or the new. Imagine what I'm facing? Don't cover it up. I told you on 21 that I could prove the vast obstruction of this and I will beg the court to enforce it on who. Just step up and bring me back to work so I can keep my wife sound, otherwise I can only pray the county will adopt me because this view is public and I have an image to obtain and uphold no matter im going to serve with the most integrity and honesty and the best I possibly can because we are equal. Own it! If there is no nepotism involved. I love you, thank you for letting me speak to you."

Drew-Resident

"Good evening. My name is Drew. I live at 1616 Allegheny Drive. Before anything else, I would like to congratulate Mayor Creech. Tonight is your first meeting in an official role, and I'm grateful for your willingness to serve our community. I'm looking forward to seeing what the board accomplishes in the months ahead. That's all I'm gonna say about politics. And a big sigh of relief. I would like to share a concern about our utility billing and payment system. And I'm bringing this up not to criticize anyone, but because I believe we have an opportunity to make things easier for both residents and staff. When I moved to Ranlo, I set up my water and sewer services and used the online system to enroll in

autopay. The interface was clunky, but not unusual for municipal systems. However, last month, I ran into 2 issues. First, my bill was a little over 100 dollars. And because the system has a default autopay limit of 100 dollars, the final dollar and change did not get paid. Second, I changed banks and needed to update my payment information. When I logged in to the online system, I found that there was no way to manage my autopay, not to change the card amount or account, not to adjust the autopay limit, not to pause it. The system shows that autopay exists, but residents have no control over it. There's no online help, no chat support, no technical contact listed, only the Town of Ranlo's phone number. So, I called the town. The staff member I spoke to was polite, but she explained that because I had set up autopay through a third-party system, the same one that our online portal links to, she could not assist me. She didn't know how the system worked and said that they tell people not to use that option. The problem is residents see the auto pay option right in front of them. It is reasonable to expect that if the town offers it, the town can support it. And right now, they can't. This issue tells me that we don't just have a single glitch. We have a systemic issue with our online payment tools. For 2025 standards, residents should be able to handle basic account tasks, updating payment methods, adjusting auto pay limits, managing their billing on their computer or smartphone. These systems are inexpensive, widely available, and routinely used by towns much smaller than Ranlo. And most of the processing costs are actually passed through to the end user, not the town. So, my request is simple. I ask that the town manager explore modern resident friendly options for online utility billing and payment and that the board of commissioners consider updating our system to something that better serves both the public and the Town staff. A modern billing system would reduce confusion, improve efficiency, and provide a better experience for everyone who calls Ranlo home. If the town manager or any member of the board would like more information about the issues I encountered, I would be happy to talk about them. I'm more than happy to share what I've learned. Thank you for your time."

Ken Lehey- Resident

"Hello, everyone. Wanna congratulate Mayor Cory Creech and graciously friended me on Facebook, and I talked to him about an issue that I had. And he said, why don't you come on down and talk to the people about it, and that'll support your issue. Both of these issues are concerning the police department in Ranlo. I've lived here 9 years. I lived in the largest subdivision in town, Mountain View, buried by a long shot. Dense, densely houses all over the place. Well over 300. I never, I've been here 9 years, and I never see the police drive through my neighborhood. Halloween, they drive through my neighborhood. Okay? We need community policing. We need the police to do a zone check-in my neighborhood. We have a lot of renters in this area. A lot. Maybe 40 percent. Okay? You got speeding. You

got running stop signs. You got going the wrong way on the roundabout. You got an apartment in Denali where bullies hang out and bully the children and adults too. You have kids that block the road and not move when you drive up. You have mini bison go karts zipping all over the place. No helmets. So, I was told by Charlie Hansen when I brought this up that, oh, the police come there all the time. Don't worry about it. So, I set up my camera on my culdesac, and I aimed it at the street for 1 week, and I never saw 1 police car. So that just proved to me they're not around. They need to be around. Now this is an unsubstantiated rumor, but I was told, and I heard from my neighbors, that the police were told by the Mayor, stay out of my neighborhood because it's a ghetto. That's what I heard, and that's why I believe they don't show up. Okay. My second thing is Ranlo has drones, and I would like these questions answered at a future time. I think we have 3 drones because they tend to seem to go over my house almost every day. I understand drones are for surveillance, search and rescue, and tracking suspects. So, I would like to know what the Ranlo drones or 3 biggest successes have been recently other than buzzing around. Do we use the police to operate the drones? How many hours and how many days do the police sit there and fly the drones? How much is budgeted for these drones? It's concerning because I see them flying around and I don't know if there's a missing person or what they're doing. So, I'd like more information as a town person and I thank you for your time."

Mayor Black responded to Mr. Lehey, stating that the allegation that he told police not to go into the neighborhood or called it a ghetto was false and that it didn't come from his mouth.

Old Business:

V. Adoption of November 13th, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes of the Board

Mayor Lynn Black called for a motion to approve the November 13, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Laws made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Locklear. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Adoption of November 13th, 2025, Closed Session Meeting Minutes of the Board

Mayor Lynn Black called for a motion to approve November 13th, 2025, closed session Meeting Minutes. Mayor Pro-Tem Moore made the motion. Commissioner's conner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

VII. Swearing-In of New Elected Officials

The following officials were sworn in:

- Mayor- Corey Creech
- Commissioner- Schivette Hill
- Commissioner- Robin Conner

After swearing-in, Mayor Creech addressed the attendees, "Alright. Guys, that's the end of swearing-in. But I would like to thank everybody for coming out. I wanna tell you, everybody in this town welcomed me in with open arms. I will tell you that. We had a toy run last weekend. I don't know if he was the head of it, Chief Lunsford or not, but Chief Lunsford is a man of God. He surely is. I've had a chance to talk to him, and he has the love of God in him. God brought me here for a reason. And as you can see, we are publicizing. And he wants to show that love across the nation. We're gonna unify, and we're gonna complete some really great projects here in Ranlo. We've already started talking. The town manager can vouch for that. We'll release our plans soon, and we wanna continue to bring people together by hearing from everybody. Just like you spoke tonight. Right? We wanna do things that's gonna be helpful for the whole town. This town's gonna look different because God's in it. But you guys are welcome to leave at this point. We're gonna conduct the rest of the meeting, but it's up to you to stay around."

VIII. Appointment of Various Positions

The Mayor moved to appoint individuals to various positions.

Mayor Pro-Tem:

Commissioner Moore made a motion to elect Commissioner Robin Conner as Mayor Pro-Tem. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) representative

Commissioner Locklear made a motion to elect Mayor Creech to serve as the delegate for MPO. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Alternate MPO representative

Commissioner Moore made a motion to elect Mayor Pro-Tem Conner to serve as the alternate delegate for MPO. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Centralina Regional Council delegate

Commissioner Laws made a motion to elect Commissioner Hill to serve as the delegate for Centralina. Commissioner Moore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Alternate to the Centralina Regional Council

Commissioner Laws made a motion to elect Commissioner Moore to serve as the alternate delegate for Centralina. Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Board of Commissioners Rules & Procedure- Nick Tosco, Town Attorney

Town Attorney Nick Tosco presented the Board of Commissioners' Rules and Procedure. He explained that the rules were based on Robert's Rules of Order and aligned with UNC School of Government suggested procedures. Mr. Tosco noted that previously, Ranlo had some procedural rules in their code of ordinances, but they weren't comprehensive. He had drafted more comprehensive rules as a policy for the Board to adopt, along with an ordinance to repeal the existing provisions in the code. Mr. Tosco reviewed key sections of the rules including: Applicability and definitions, Requirements for quorum (4 members needed), Remote participation (allowed for listening only; physical presence required for quorum and voting), Closed session protocols, Meeting minutes requirements, Organization of the Board, Types of meetings (regular and special), Agenda procedures and order of business, Duties of the mayor and presiding officer, and Motions and voting procedures. He emphasized several important points: Board members have a duty to vote and cannot abstain, Members with conflicts of interest must be formally excused by the Board, Rules for public hearings and public comment periods, and Amendments to rules require a two-meeting process. Mr. Tosco explained that the rules create a framework for orderly meetings while ensuring compliance with state law.

Commissioner Doug Moore made a motion to hold off on voting to adopt the Rules & procedure till everyone had a chance to fully read over. Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

X. Update and Discussion from the Wooten Company

Matt Echols from The Wooten Company provided an update on infrastructure projects, highlighting that the Town of Ranlo has secured \$14 million in grant funding for various projects. He presented a map showing the connections between funding sources and projects, noting that some grants covered multiple projects.

Mr. Echols focused on the Waterline Replacements East project, which aims to replace small diameter, aging water lines with larger 6-inch diameter lines to improve capacity, fire flow, and system resiliency. The project would affect several streets including Ranlo Avenue, Burlington Avenue, Love Street, Crescent Avenue, Ryan Place, East Ryan Street, North Franklin Street, North Second Street, and East Long Street.

Unfortunately, bids came in over budget with a \$1,770,000 deficit. Since no additional grant funds are available, Mr. Echols presented options to modify the project scope to stay within budget. This included:

1. Potentially having town crews perform some water service reconnections
2. Removing certain streets from the scope (Ranlo Avenue, Love Street, Crescent Avenue, and Burlington Avenue)

Mr. Echols provided a detailed financial breakdown showing that these modifications could bring the project back within budget. He explained that the next steps would include negotiating the scope change with the low bidder (Lewis Site Development), obtaining approval from the Division of Water Infrastructure, and bringing the modified contract back to the Board for approval. Future funding would be pursued to complete the removed portions.

XI. Presentation of the Annual Financial Audit- Eddie Carrick

Eddie Carrick presented the annual financial audit, providing a comparative analysis of the town's finances. For the General Fund, he reported revenues over expenditures of \$1.5 million for the year, with local option sales tax up by \$111,000 and grants up by \$234,000. Key financial highlights included: Unrestricted cash position: \$5.3 million (up from \$3.8 million), Unassigned fund balance: \$5.2 million (143% of annual expenditures), State average for towns of similar size: approximately 65% fund balance and Tax collection rate: 99.1% (about 3% above state average). For the Water and Sewer Fund, total revenue was up \$187,000 and expenditures up \$176,000, resulting in a positive balance of \$38,000. The unrestricted cash position was \$1.1 million. Mr. Carrick noted one area of concern from the State Treasurer's Office: the town's depreciated water/sewer assets are below 50% (at approximately 40%). He explained this is unavoidable given the aging infrastructure, and the town will need to respond to the Treasurer's Office about this matter.

XII. Adoption of the 2026 Meeting and Holiday Schedule

Town Manager Charlie Hansen presented the 2026 holiday schedule and regular meeting dates for the Board's consideration. He noted there were no conflicts between holidays and meeting dates, with all regular meetings scheduled for the second Thursday of each month. He mentioned that the events calendar would be presented the following month. Commissioner Moore motion to approved both the holiday schedule and the regular meeting schedule. Commissioner Laws seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Presentation of Monthly Expense and Financial Report

The Town Manager went over the new Monthly Financial Expense Report noting that this month's report goes over the monthly and year-to-date spending for the Town. The manager highlighted Page 1 of the report gives an overall look at all the Town's accounts and associated interests accrued in each of the accounts. Page two of the document shows each department account within the general operating budget and the percentage each account has expended compared to how far along the town is throughout the fiscal year.

Other Business:

XIV. Town Manager's Report

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager Charlie Hansen reported that he and Commissioner Hill had been discussing a potential rebranding of the "Chats with Charlie" public engagement series. Commissioner Hill suggested expanding it to include Board members on a rotating basis, creating a "Chat with Council and Charlie" format where residents could speak directly with both staff and elected officials. Mr. Hansen indicated this would be rolled out in January of the new year.

XV. Comments from the Mayor

Mayor Creech shared his vision for his term, expressing his desire to bring the community together. He mentioned meeting with all the commissioners for lunch to build camaraderie and also meeting with the police department. The Mayor emphasized his commitment to promoting business development in Ranlo, bringing in more revenue, and mentioned a recent meeting with Tim Moore and James Estes. He concluded by stating his only goal was to serve the people of Ranlo and do what's right.

XVI. Comments from the Board

Commissioner Robin Connor expressed her appreciation for participating in a motorcycle ride with Toys for Tots during the previous weekend. She shared her enthusiasm for serving four more years and noted the diversity within Ranlo neighborhoods.

Commissioner Hill thanked residents for their support during her campaign and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet residents and hear their stories. She voiced support for the idea of commissioners participating in "Chats with Charlie."

Commissioner Connor mentioned the importance of addressing citizen concerns brought forward during public comments and suggested discussing those issues at the next meeting.

XVII. Adjournment

Commissioner Laws made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Locklear seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous 5-0 vote.

ATTESTED TO:

Mayor Cory Creech

