

MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'
BRIEFING MEETING OF MAY 20, 2025.

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met to hold a Briefing Meeting on May 20, 2025, in the Commission Chamber at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Amanda Edwards; Vice-Chair Martin Moore; Commissioner Terri Wells, Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Parker Sloan; Commissioner Jennifer Horton; Commissioner Drew Ball.

The following items were reviewed.

FCC Update

Dane Pederson, Solid Waste Director, introduced FCC leadership to provide an update. Charles reported that FCC is currently servicing approximately 7,800 households a day and provided some of the service improvements made since launching in January which include: Route optimization began on April 21st; Enhanced pup truck routes and added regular route; Route Mangers follow up daily on customers' issues to find the root cause and correct it; utilizing the onboard tablets; and new staff and reorganization with new positions added. Thus far, FCC has allocated a total of 7,776 credits to residents totaling \$205,550.10. Charles also touched on the upcoming community outreach opportunities in the County. Commissioner Wells asked about continued misses. FCC staff confirmed new processes have been put in place to fix the root cause of the ongoing issues. Chair Edwards asked about the call center. Charles said they have reached out to local call centers to add resources and address the call volume. Commissioner Ball urged residents to pick up their cans if they are able and have not received theirs yet.

Dane Pederson, Solid Waste Director provided an update to inform the Board that the County has issued fines totaling \$46,800. These fines are for the period of January through April 2025. In addition, staff requested that FCC sponsor 4 community events at \$5k each (\$20k total). Commissioner Moore asked about updates and Pederson said that regular monthly updates could continue to be provided at Briefings.

Helene Update

Manager Pinder opened the update and introduced Dane Pederson to begin with a debris update. Pederson explained that Right of Way debris removal has closed with Federal Partners and is no longer being collected. The County is working closely with FEMA to assess roads for remaining debris and that the County is actively pursuing options through the North Carolina State Mission Assigned Recovery Task Force (SMART) to manage remaining debris removal in the right of way. Pederson requested that residents help with this debris removal task by refraining from placing additional debris in the right of way, including private contractors and volunteers that may be assisting with property clean up as this debris is no longer eligible for removal. The County will continue to collect data about any remaining debris piles in the Right of Way from calls directed to One Buncombe Call center 828-250-6100 #2. Pederson also explained that Waterway debris removal continues with FEMA and USACE and State partners

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to ensure safe removal of debris and that Waterway debris removal deadline extended through June 15.

Jennifer Harrison provided an update on the Emergency Watershed Protection. She highlighted that 25.45 M has been assessed in damages which is protecting about \$84.84M in structural value requested, noting that these numbers are good in terms of value. 162 first review rounds have been submitted at this point. In that first round, 79 have been approved. Commissioner Wells if the property owner had to put any funds in? Harrison advised that the program is funded by the Federal Government and there is no cost to the property owner.

Brad Hughes provided an update on the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. He explained that Federal disaster declaration triggers FEMA funding and that Property owners apply voluntarily. NCEM groups applications into batches, considering factors like: Project Type • Cost Effectiveness and that NCEM forwards application group to Buncombe County. The County works internally and with our municipal partners to review applications and submits the final approved properties for inclusion in our application to NCEM. Wells asked where she should direct residents with questions. Hughes advised that the State has a hotline number and/or they can contact the County at Hmgrp@buncombenc.gov for application updates.

Burnett Walz provided an update on Landslides. He explained that there was over 2,000+ landslides occurred in Western NC due to Helene and that Buncombe County accounts for approximately 50% of the total with varying magnitudes of size and damage. According to FEMA the scale is unprecedented. The County does not have subject matter experts on staff; and FEMA & North Carolina Emergency Management have no existing policy guidelines for the magnitude of slides in the region. The FEMA Pilot program in place and Initial assessments conducted on the County's larger slides to determine the level of imminent danger. He explained that staff are working with GIS to develop GIS maps of landslides impacting specific properties in the County.

Rafeal Baptista provided an update on roads and bridges. He explained that there are 3,000+ damaged private bridges and roads in Western North Carolina and that Buncombe County accounts for approximately 30% of total Helene damages in NC with varying magnitudes of size and damage. According to FEMA the scale is unprecedented, and the County does not have subject matter experts on staff. Initial assessments conducted by Fire Marshals and National Guard to identify priority bridges and roads.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Gillian Phillips, Planning and Development Department provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan. She explained that the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in May 2023 as the County's first plan to create overall visions and themes for future growth. She further explained that per North Carolina state law, when a map amendment is approved which does not conform to an adopted Comprehensive Plan's future land use map, the rezoning has the effect of automatically changing the adopted map. Upcoming Ordinance considerations are grouped by three key buckets: 1) housing; economic development; and recovery. Phillips also provided information about Small Area Plans. The first and in process is the Swannanoa Plan which will include upcoming public engagement, Technical Expertise Committee, Steering Committee. The plan will review Existing Conditions Study, Hazard Vulnerability Analysis, and develop a Small Area & Resilience Plan.

Nathan Pennington provided an update on the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. He explained that post Helene activities include: 1. Substantial damage appeals 2. Permitting

(reconstruction, new construction, bridge/culverts, etc.) 3. Retroactively fully permit/close out all temp emergency permits 4. Provide support as part of the HMGP Team 5. Working with Land Resources on stream restoration and realignments and that future program changes and text amendments will 1) be a phased approach to joining the Community Rating System; and 2. evaluate higher standards.

Website Transition

Lillian Govus, Communications Director provided an update on the County Website transition. She explained that the new website will allow staff to: 1) create, manage, and publish digital content without coding knowledge; 2) Multiple team members can manage content in a CMS and make updates in real-time; 3) Handles all back-end and front-end coding; 4) Staff can focus on producing content and creating an engaging user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) ; 5) Staff can easily add videos, images, social media through modules; and 6) Easily adapts for mobile usage. She explained that the Communication team is currently in the process of reviewing all webpages and that the go-live date is set for June 17, 2025.

CDBG-NR Quarterly Report

Nancy Willimans provided an update on the Community Development Block Grant NR update. She explained this was a required quarterly update and that NCDOT REDD awarded the initial grant to support home repairs for low- to moderate-income homeowners. Buncombe County identified Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity as a subrecipient to receive a portion of the funds to perform home repairs and Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity is focusing on Helene recovery repairs and noticed exit from the contract. She explained that County staff continues conversations with NCDOT REDD on other fund options and that NCDOT REDD continues to express ongoing support and willingness to assist in Buncombe County's Helene recovery.

Board Updates and Discussion

Following the Staff updates, Manager Pinder and Commissioner Wells provided an update on the Swannanoa Post Office communication from Senator Budds office. She explained that the initial response from the USPS Government Relations Representative in Washington, DC to Senator Budd's inquiry in regard to the Swannanoa Post Office. They said that they have initiated what is known as an alternate quarters project for the Swannanoa Post Office. What this means is we are not staying at the former location and are actively looking for real estate in the area that is available for lease on terms that are commercially viable and comparable with other business-use leases.

Commissioner Sloan introduced a draft City/County letter addressed to Division 13, NCDOT regarding the proposed I-26 bridge over Patton Avenue. He explained that Asheville City Council and the Buncombe County Commissioner representatives have been in talks with NCDOT and he was excited to share that NCDOT has been receptive to proposed collaboration to create a final design. The letter outlined the request for: 1) Reconsideration of the current I-26 flyover bridge design and other cost-saving ideas; 2) Commitment to meaningful community engagement to finalize the design; 3) Commitment to transparency through updates to the

French Broad Metropolitan Planning Organization (FB MPO); and Maintain momentum toward completing the I-26 Connector. The Board reviewed the proposed letter and gave consent to sign and send the letter to Division 13, NCDOT with the City of Asheville. Manager Pinder noted that the County has not allocated the 1 million in funds yet. It was discussed that would fund back when it was first discussed several years ago; however the funds will need to be set aside when funding comes up.

To close out the meeting, Manager Pinder announced that Helene updates will move from twice a month at briefings to once a month, on the second Briefing of the month.

MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'
REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 20, 2025.

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met to hold a Regular Meeting on May 20, 2025, in the Commission Chamber at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Amanda Edwards; Vice-Chair Martin Moore; Commissioner Terri Wells, Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Parker Sloan; Commissioner Jennifer Horton; Commissioner Drew Ball.

The Chair opened the meeting and provided opening statements.

Vice-Chair Moore made the motion to approve the agenda as presented and to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Sloan seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of May 6, 2025 Combined Briefing and Regular Meeting Minutes
2. Agreement with Native Forms Architecture PLLC for the Asheville High School Culinary Kitchen Classroom Renovation
 - a. Agreement
3. Affordable Housing Services Program Description, Requirements and Guidelines
 - a. Affordable Housing Services Program Guidelines
4. Budget Amendment for NC Urban Search and Rescue Task Force 2 Reimbursement
 - a. Budget Amendment
5. Amendment to Memorandum of Understanding for Air Quality Monitoring Site Expansion at AB Tech
 - a. Amendment
6. Budget Amendment for the ICMA Economic Mobility and Opportunity Grant
 - a. Budget Amendment
7. Rate Adjustment for Purchased Transportation Services
 - a. More Information
8. Resolution Approving Pyrotechnic Experts for Firework Displays
 - a. Resolution

Public Comment

None.

Good News

1. Mountain Mobility Recognized as NCPTA Transit System of the Year

Nate Pennington introduced William High who advised Buncombe County's Community Transportation System, Mountain Mobility, achieved three noteworthy accomplishments in recent months. 1. Mountain Mobility was recognized with the Transit System of the Year award by the North Carolina Public Transportation Association (NCPTA) at its Annual Conference on April 29. Western North Carolina transit systems impacted by Helene were recognized. He

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further explained that Mountain Mobility's commitment to providing accessible and efficient transportation services responsive to the needs of Buncombe County residents were highlighted. In the immediate aftermath of the storm, Mountain Mobility vehicle operators performed over 12,000 miles of service which included delivering meals to emergency responders while also transporting residents to dialysis, life-sustaining medical treatments, and various trips connecting residents to vital resources. Mountain Mobility was subject to a Proficiency Review, a triennial review, by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Integrated Mobility Division (IMD). The Proficiency Review was culminated in an on-site visit and audit of records to confirm a desk audit conducted in the preceding months. On February 25, 2025, the NCDOT issued a formal letter regarding Mountain Mobility's Proficiency Review, finding Buncombe County's system to be deficiency free and in full compliance with State and Federal requirements. The collective efforts of County staff and our contracted operating and administrative partners are reflected in the deficiency free review. On March 6 Maudlin & Jenkins issued its IAS-FD indicating that the County's reporting of Mountain Mobility financial were without exception and that the collective effort of County staff ensured the accuracy of our financial reporting to remain compliant with Federal requirements.

2. Angie Lee Appointed to NC Floodplain Managers Board

Nate Pennington provided the update. He explained that Angela Lee is Buncombe County's designated floodplain administrator. She was recently appointed to serve as the Western Regional Representative (Region F) of the NCAFPM. Buncombe County has a long history of representation on the board, prior members include Cynthia Fox Clark, CFM, Brad Burton, CFM and Nathan Pennington, CFM. The Association was created in 1989 to bring together local, state and private sector professionals to share knowledge and disseminate information about the National Flood Insurance Program. The Board works closely with the NC Division of Emergency Management and FEMA and was instrumental in the creation of the Floodplain Mapping Program and the designation of NC as a Cooperating Technical State with FEMA.

3. Statewide Recognition for 911 Team Member

Dr. Osiris Carter announced that the County is proud to share that Amy Padilla-Cortes, a dedicated member of Buncombe County Public Safety Communications, has been awarded the 2025 Peer Team Member of the Year by the North Carolina Chapter of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials International (APCO) and National Emergency Number Association (NENA). This honor recognizes Amy's outstanding contributions to public safety service, the 911 profession, and her Buncombe County Teammates. This includes her meritorious service, life-saving actions, and unwavering commitment to supporting all First Responders across North Carolina. Amy's dedication reflects the excellence, heart, and soul of the Buncombe County 911 First Responder team, and we are incredibly proud to have her represent our Team. During the week of April 13th through 19th, 2025, our Team celebrated National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. Since 1981, this week has been a time set aside to celebrate and thank Telecommunication professionals across the nation who serve our communities, citizens, and public safety personnel 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our team was recognized by several county vendors, our stakeholders, our partner agencies, and the community at large for the stellar service that we provide day in and day out. During the week of May 5th, 2025 we had the distinct pleasure of attending the North Carolina Public

Safety Conference held in Wilmington. As a result of our participation, we were asked to host the next upcoming bi-monthly Chapter Meeting for APCO/NENA; a distinction that's a first for our County. We will leverage this amazing opportunity to further spread the beauty of Buncombe County all the while, celebrating the amazing accomplishments of our Team.

4. Election Services Honored for Excellence in Administration

Neggy Fox explained that Buncombe County Election Services honored for excellence. She explained that on April 16 the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) recognized that effort with a Clearinghouse Award in Contingency Planning: Exemplary Contingency Planning and Emergency Response Efforts. Election Services and Emergency Services staff began working together in 2022 on an Incident Action Plan (IAP) for implementation in the event of an emergency during an election and that plan proved critical in compassionately overcoming problems never encountered before. Election Services also garnered a second Clearinghouse award in Communications: Distinguished Voter Education and Communications Initiatives for a Buncombe County Communications and Public Engagement (CAPE) department-produced video project "NC Together." The NC Together video project was a collaborative effort between the North Carolina State Board of Elections, Buncombe County CAPE, and Buncombe County Election Services. This three-part video series was designed to build trust by connecting voters to their local election officials in a personal and relatable way. The clips were woven together, creating a vibrant, statewide tapestry of election officials reassuring voters: We are here to help. NC Together. The Clearinghouse Awards recognizes best practices in election administration and celebrate programs that took place during the 2024 presidential election year. Winning jurisdictions range from counties with less than 25,000 registered voters to states with over 22.9 million. The Clearies play an essential role in fulfilling the EAC's mission to serve as a clearinghouse for election administration information under the Help America Vote Act. Submissions were judged on innovation, sustainability, outreach, cost-effectiveness, replicability, and the generation of positive results

Presentations

1. Older Americans Month Proclamation

Commissioner Whitesides read the proclamation to Billie Breeden with Buncombe County Aging Services. Breeden invited the Board to attend a Free Community Fair called Flip the Script on Aging on June 10 in which Commissioner Horton will be the keynote speaker.

2. 3rd Quarter Financial Report for FY2025

Melissa Moore, Finance Director provided the report that included General Fund and Solid Waste Fund budget versus actual, summarizing revenue and expenditures year-to-date, current net County cost actuals, a Capital Project overview, and an Investment Report.

Commissioner Wells asked about the General Fund Budget to Actual revenue by type. Moore clarified that the collection rate is against the budget and is how the County plans spending. The County adopted the budget with 3.5% growth over the prior year. Even though there was revenue growth the expenditure was higher than revenue. She cautioned that revenue would need to continue to grow to meet expenditure.

Public Hearings

1. Public Hearing to Consider Amendments to the Personnel Ordinance

Karen Marshall, Interim Human Resources Director provided background information on the proposed policy updates. She explained that in 2021 we began a multi-year project to update the Personnel Ordinance. The updates have been designed to eliminate conflicting language, align language with practice, and increase transparency by providing employees with greater detail on HR operations. Today the Board is asked to hold the Public Hearing and adopt 3 new policies: the updated Personnel Ordinance, the updated Benefits policy and the new Position Classification policy. The Board was also presented with the new Recruiting and Selection policy and the Workplace Violence policy for awareness.

Commissioner Wells asked to clarify what positions will still come before the Board. Manager Pinder clarified that the same position would come before the Board and that Department Directors have discretion of the structure in their departments for the other positions.

Chair Edwards opened the Public Hearing at 5:57 p.m. and there were no comments. The Public Hearing closed at 5:57 p.m.

Commissioner Whitesides made the motion to approve the presented policy revisions as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horton and approved unanimously.

2. Public Hearing to Consider the Manager's Proposed FY26 Budget

Vice-Mayor Moore made the motion to reduce time from 3 to two mins to ensure all speakers had the opportunity to speak. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Public Hearing speakers:

1. Pepi Acebo – support for school funding
2. Kristen Winstead - support for school funding
3. Ashley Allen - support for school funding
4. Paul Barrity - support for school funding
5. Becky King - support for school funding
6. Stephanie Dean - support for school funding
7. Jeremy Beau - support for school funding
8. Hannah Palmer - support for school funding
9. Karla Weis - support for school funding
10. Christina Mason - support for school funding
11. Margaret Belk - support for school funding
12. Andrew Paul - support for school funding
13. Alexis Champion - support for school funding

14. Susan Kask - support for school funding
15. Natalie Dorsey- support for school funding
16. Julie Noblitt - support for school funding
17. Rachel Cohen – support for climate funding
18. Sawyer Johnston - support for school funding
19. Tim Lloyd - support for school funding
20. Kim Matyskiela - support for school funding
21. Chris Harjes - support for school funding
22. Daniel Shotley – support for school funding
23. Evan Tidenngton – support for school funding
24. Adam Salvitti Gucwa – support for school funding
25. Patty Beaver – request not to raise property taxes
26. Lissa – support for school funding
27. Laura Mcque – against proposed tax increase
28. Abigail Carson – against proposed tax increase
29. Barbara Hudgens - against proposed tax increase

Public Hearing closed at 7:09 p.m. Public Hearing reopened for additional speaker at 7:09 p.m. Barbara Hudgens spoke in opposition to a tax increase and the Public Hearing closed again at 7:12 p.m.

John Hudson presented information on the FY2026 Economic Development Hearing, which included routine appropriations to: 1) Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission; and 2) Asheville-Buncombe County Economic Development Coalitions as well as previous development agreements which include: 1) BorgWarner Turbo Systems, LLC; 2) New Belgium Brewing Company, Inc.; and 3) Pratt & Whitney

Chair Edwards opened the Public Hearing at 7:14 p.m. There were no public comments, and the Public Hearing was closed at 7:14.

New Business

1. Resolution to Delegate Authority to Approve Reimbursement Resolutions

Mellissa Moore, Finance Director, explained that once the Board of Commissioners approves Project Ordinance capital project costs begin to occur. North Carolina typically does not authorize the issuance of debt until the project is ready to begin construction. Once the debt is issued all the costs toward the capital project can be reimbursed out of the bond proceeds. A Reimbursement Resolution is required by the IRS to use tax-exempt bond proceeds to reimburse expenditures. There must be a Reimbursement Resolution in place within 60 days of the transaction. To make the capital project process more efficient staff is requesting the authority to approve Reimbursement Resolutions with notification to the Board upon completion.

Vice-Chair Moore made the motion to approve as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sloan and passed unanimously.

2. Resolution forming the Swannanoa Small Area and Resilience Plan Steering Committee

Gillian Phillips, Planner, introduced the proposed Steering Committee for the upcoming Swannanoa Small Area and Resilience Plan. She explained that this will allow the advertisement of the committee to start and allow us to accept applications. The Steering Committee will be responsible for: 1) Guidance and feedback on the planning process; 2) Providing information about the study area and community needs; 3) Helping to identify vision themes, goals, policies, and actions; 4) Review of public input data; 5) Feedback and guidance on plan drafting. She further explained that the application would be open for 30 days and that staff would provide a recommendation before appointments were made in July/August.

Commissioner Wells made the motion to approve the creation of the Committee to provide guidance and direction to staff regarding the Swannanoa Small Area and Resilience Plan. The motion as seconded by Commissioner Horton and carried unanimously.

1. Helene Household Assistance Program

Tyler Henry, Grants Manager, explained that on November 1, 2024, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners approved the reallocation of \$1.597 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support the Helene Relief Household Assistance Programs. In December 2024, Buncombe County Economic Services launched the application process for Household Assistance grants and received a total of 5,826 submissions. On January 21, 2025, the Board of Commissioners authorized the execution of an interlocal agreement to receive \$624,000 in Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery and Resilience Funds (CDBG-DDRF) from the City of Asheville. Through combined funding sources and program initiatives, the County has aided 607 households with incomes at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). On May 13, 2025, Asheville City Council approved an additional allocation of \$135,074.80 to the Household Assistance Program, which is projected to support approximately 34 additional households.

Commissioner Whitesides made the motion to approve a budget amendment to accept funds from the City of Asheville and authorize the County Manager or designee to amend and execute an interlocal agreement with the City of Asheville. Commissioner Ball seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Board Appointments

Commissioner Wells made the motion to reappoint: Daniel Beerman; Deborah Oldt; Susan Schiemer; Eileen McMinn; and Melissa Harmon to the Home & Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sloan and carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair Moore made the motion to appoint Susannah Knox and Michael Morrison to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ball and carried unanimously.

Board Updates

Chair Edwards announced that the Board has received 16 applications for the Affordable Housing Committee requested that the Deputy Clerk send the applications to the full board to schedule upcoming interviews.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.