MINUTES
BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING

The Burke County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, July 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, Burke County Services Building, 110 N. Green Street, Entrance E, in Morganton, North Carolina. The meeting was streamed live on the County's YouTube channel, BurkeCountyNC, and it was broadcast on the local cable systems. The agenda, in its entirety, was posted to the County's website, www.burkenc.org, several days prior to the meeting. Pursuant to Resolution No. 2024-17, adopted and effective on August 20, 2024, the Burke County Board of Commissioners conferred upon itself all the power, duties, and responsibilities of the Board of Health and the Social Services Board. Those present were:

COMMISSIONERS:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman Phil Smith, Vice Chairman Brian Barrier Randy Burns Mike Stroud
STAFF:	Brian Epley, County Manager Destin Hall, Wilson, Lackey, Rohr & Hall P.C. (Late – arrived at 6:03 p.m.) Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board
STAFF ABSENT:	Margaret Pierce, Finance Director/Deputy County Manager (Attending a conference.)

CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Brittain called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION
Pastor David Bridges, First Apostolic Church of Morganton, delivered the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Youth from the First Apostolic Church of Morganton led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.



Commissioner Stroud, Commissioner Burns, Chairman Brittain, Commissioner Barrier, and Vice Chairman Smith with Hudson Hash, Koen Kirk, Naomi Benge, and Liam Benge.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES
Motion: To approve the April 7, 2025 (pre-agenda) meeting minutes as written.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

PRESENTATIONS

GT - PRESENTATION ON GREENWAY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
Michael D. Bowman, Executive Director of Greenway Public Transportation (Western Piedmont Regional Transportation Authority), provided an overview of recent service developments, operational highlights, funding updates, and future initiatives impacting Burke County as follows:

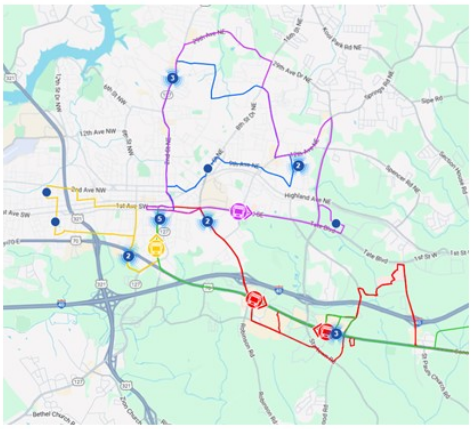


GREENway PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

RESPONSIBLE TRANSPORTATION RIDE JUST ONE DAY A WEEK

APC with Flex Route App



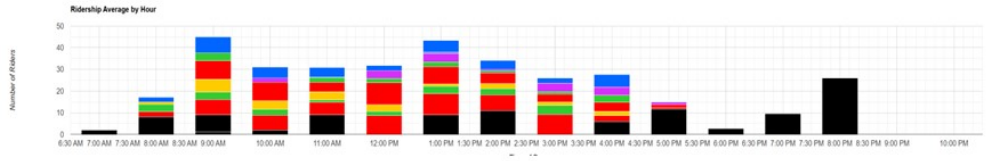


https://greenway.rider.peaktransit.com/

GREENway PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

RESPONSIBLE TRANSPORTATION RIDE JUST ONE DAY A WEEK

Data and Metrics



Vehicle Name	Vehicle ID	Distance (miles)	Starts (estimate)	Fuel Cost ($ estimate)	Average Speed (MPH)	Adherence (mins)	Idle Time (hours estimate)	Logged (hours)
0106	162645	53	1	58.05	14	-0.2	0.59	3.77
0306	162644	46	1	52.25	11.9	0.4	0.50	3.66
0406	162646	51	2	55.63	14.9	0.4	0.83	3.42
0505	162642	59	1	65.28	15.4	0.1	0.51	3.64
0506	162647	6	1	6.47	0.5	0	0.00	11.51
2351	162648	77	1	84.21	6.5	0	0.00	11.62
3128	162651	0	1	0.32	0	0	0.00	11.62
4902	162649	6	1	6.64	0.5	0	0.00	11.62
5296	162653	0	4	0.28	0	0	0.45	9.07
5416	162652	0	9	0.36	0	0	0.28	9.09

Showing 1 to 10 of 10 entries

Yesterday's Metrics by Vehicle

Vehicle Name	Vehicle ID	Distance (miles)	Starts (estimate)	Fuel Cost ($ estimate)	Average Speed (MPH)	Adherence (mins)	Idle Time (hours estimate)	Logged (hours)
0106	162645	135	2	149.90	13.1	5.4	1.62	10.33
0306	162644	144	2	158.03	13.5	0.3	2.04	10.68
0406	162646	164	3	180.01	15.5	0.5	1.60	10.55
0505	162642	142	2	155.63	12.6	4.7	2.44	11.23
0506	162647	2	1	2.08	0.1	0	0.00	23.98
2351	162648	1	1	1.13	0	0	0.00	23.98
3128	162651	1	1	1.44	0.1	0	0.43	17.49
4902	162649	21	1	22.93	0.9	0	0.00	23.96
5296	162653	1	1	1.17	0.1	0.1	0.04	17.36
5416	162652	1	3	0.78	0	0	0.00	23.75

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GREENway PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

RESPONSIBLE TRANSPORTATION RIDE JUST ONE DAY A WEEK

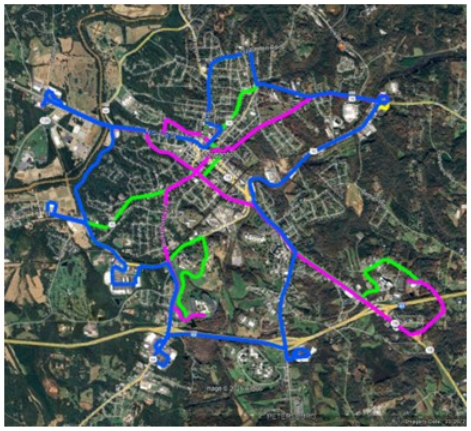
Ridership

FY 24-25	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	TOTAL
BurkeDEVFLEX125	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0		**3**
BurkeDEVFLEX125L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		**0**
BurkeDEVFLEX60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		**0**
BurkeDEVFLEX60L	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		**0**
BurkeFLEXDEVADDLVEH125	52	73	39	54	41	63	66	84	107	85	94		**758**
BurkeFLEXDEVADDLVEH125L	0	4	8	0	2	0	1	2	2	8	3		**30**
BurkeFLEXDEVADDLVEH60	104	110	117	91	84	82	81	93	81	98	57		**998**
BurkeFLEXDEVADDLVEH60L	48	40	27	38	38	42	52	48	56	41	34		**464**
Total Deviations	**204**	**227**	**191**	**183**	**165**	**187**	**200**	**227**	**249**	**232**	**188**	**0**	**2253**
BurkeDEVFLEXA	207	268	194	190	223	170	207	448	430	551	519		**3407**
BurkeDEVFLEXB	134	188	121	181	140	151	156	337	414	382	596		**2800**
FEEDER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	0	0		**7**
Total Flex A & B	**341**	**456**	**315**	**371**	**363**	**321**	**363**	**788**	**848**	**933**	**1115**	**0**	**6214**
Total Dev + Flex	**545**	**683**	**506**	**554**	**528**	**508**	**563**	**1015**	**1097**	**1165**	**1303**	**0**	**8467**
BurkeMicro	479	493	395	464	387	422	398	271	16	20	0		**3345**
BurkeRGPLMicro	6	0	0	0	8	1	0	2	2	0	2		**21**
BurkeRGPMicro	4	8	1	0	1	3	2	7	5	11	5		**47**
BurkeUGPLMicro	0	0	0	4	21	4	4	1	15	10	43		**102**
BurkeUGPMicro (Same as Micro)	0	1	0	0	0	8	13	211	310	268	355		**1166**
Total Burke Micro	**489**	**502**	**396**	**468**	**417**	**438**	**417**	**492**	**348**	**309**	**405**	**0**	**4681**
Total Trips	**1034**	**1185**	**902**	**1022**	**945**	**946**	**980**	**1507**	**1445**	**1474**	**1708**	**0**	**13148**

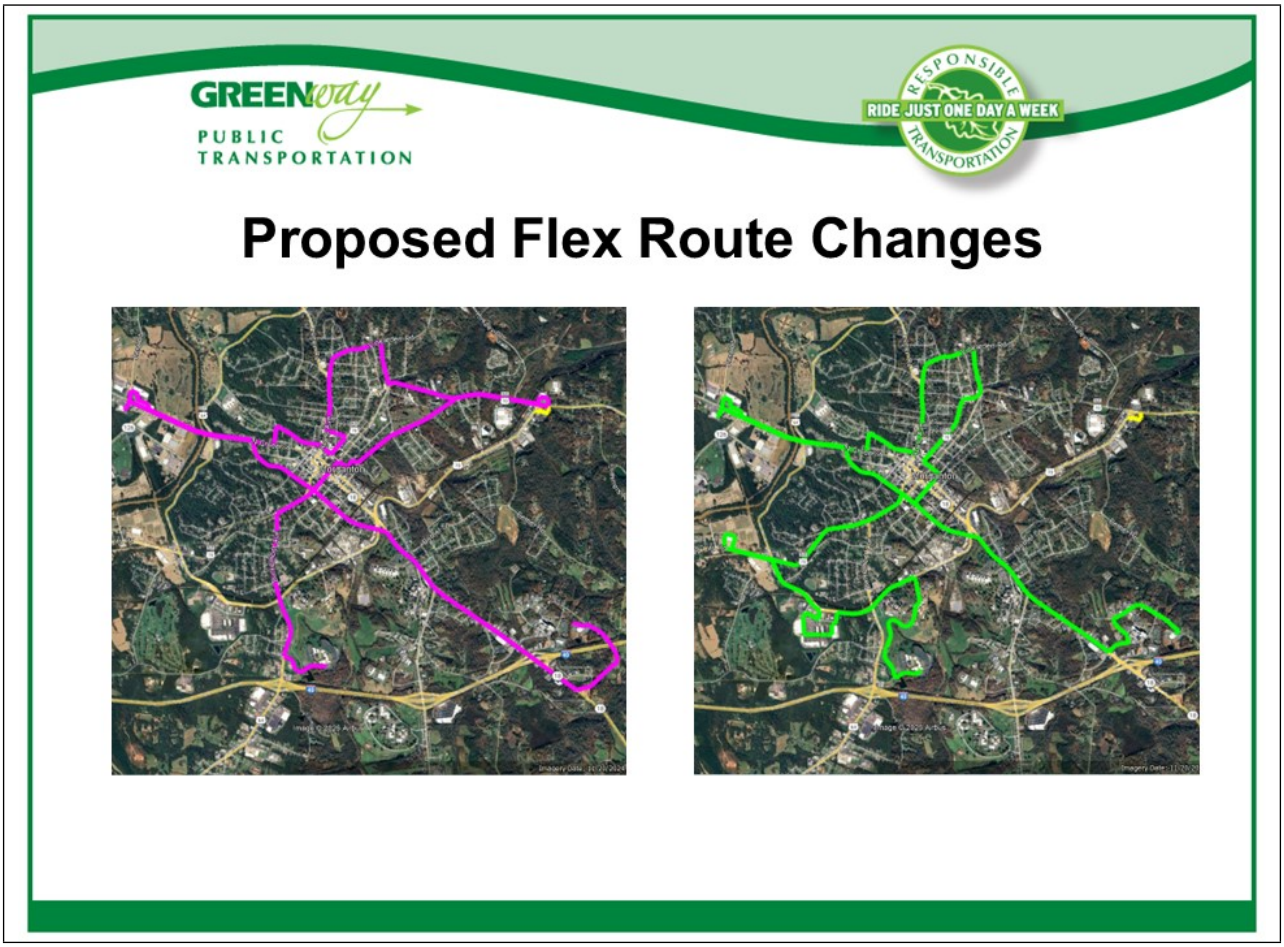
GREENway PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

RESPONSIBLE TRANSPORTATION RIDE JUST ONE DAY A WEEK

Proposed Flex Route Changes







Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Stroud asked about the main demographic of riders using Greenway's services—specifically, whether most riders were workers or individuals needing transportation to medical appointments. Mr. Bowman explained that approximately 50% of riders of the Micro-Transit program use the service for medical purposes, about 20% for workforce-related transportation, and around 30% for general purposes such as shopping, visiting friends, or running errands. He noted that Greenway is working to expand service hours to better accommodate workers by offering earlier morning and later evening routes. Mr. Bowman also shared that filling staffing vacancies has increased ridership, reduced waiting time, and allowed the agency to resume broader public services.

Commissioner Burns asked Mr. Bowman about routes serving the Burke County senior centers. Mr. Bowman explained that Greenway provides demand-response subscription services to senior centers, assisting with scheduled pickups to help seniors maintain independence and stay in their homes longer. He noted that Greenway tries to focus on single-car or no-car households. Routes and service zones are planned using demographic data from the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to maximize service efficiency. All Greenway vehicles are ADA-compliant, equipped for wheelchair access, and include transit vans, 20–24 foot LTVs, and larger 35-foot buses, which are predominantly used in Catawba County. Mr. Bowman highlighted that the agency also supports emergency situations, citing recent assistance during the Grace Heights fire, and emphasized that Greenway's fleet allows rapid and flexible

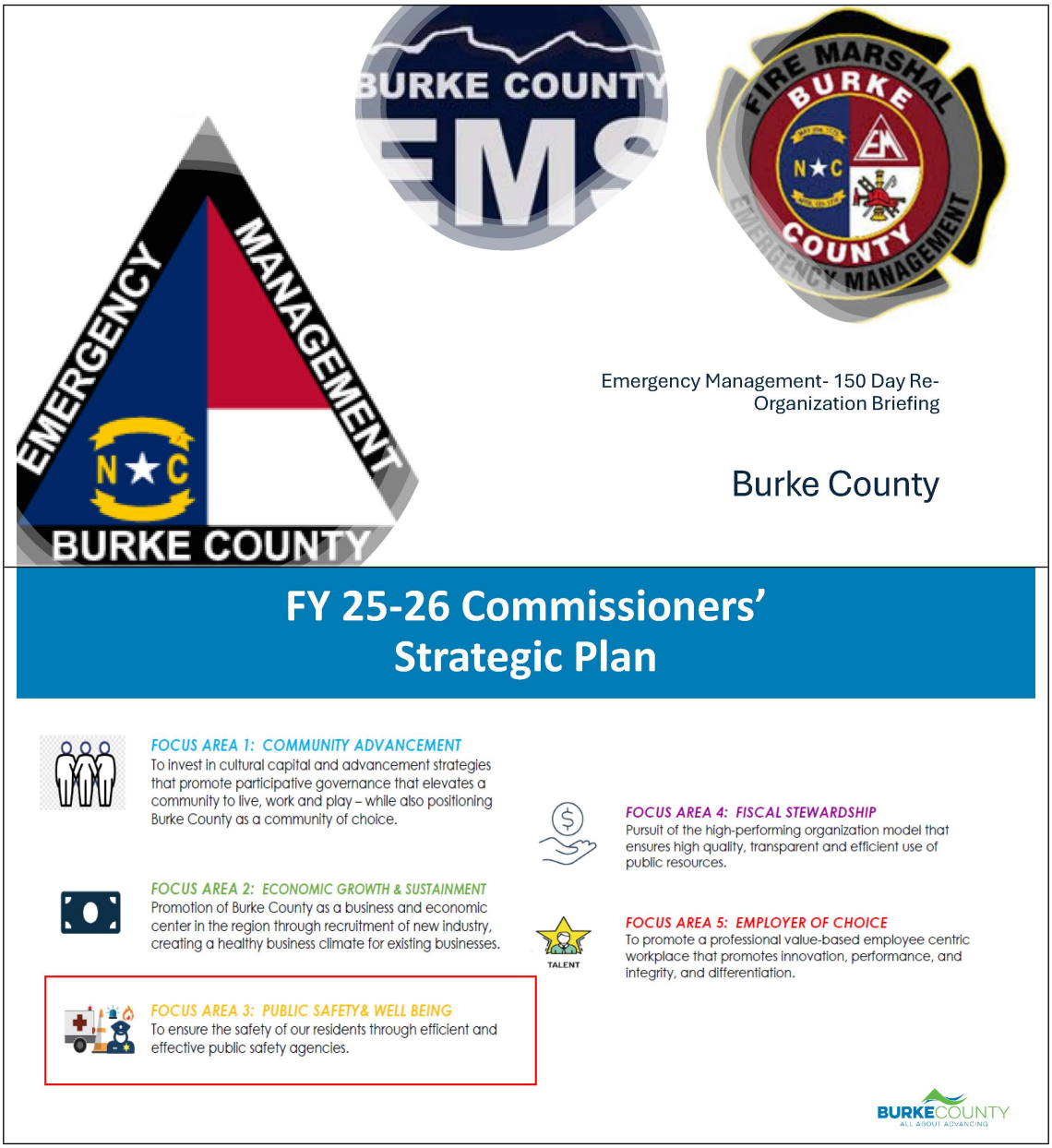
transport, including for those who are wheelchair bound. There being no further discussion, Chairman Brittain opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To accept the report as presented.

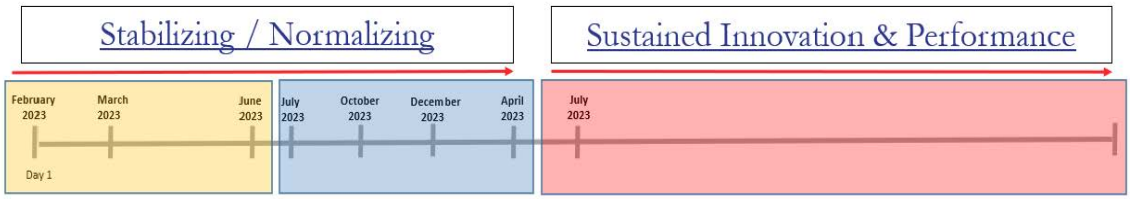
RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Brian Barrier, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

EM - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

James Robinson, Emergency Services Director, provided an update on the current status of Burke County Emergency Medical Services (BCEMS) as follows:



ReAct / ReBuild / ReThink
FY 2025-2026

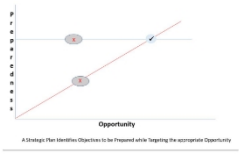


Re-Act
- Complete CULTURE Re-Set
- Targeted Pay Adjustments
- Personnel Policy Modifications
- Employee Communication
- Revaluation Management

Re-Build
- Purpose / Values / Culture
- Evaluate Economics
- Commissioner Strategic Plan
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Pay / Classification Study
- Community Partnerships
- Long Term Fiscal Planning

Re-Think
- Service Delivery Model
- Long Term Priorities
- Traditional Beliefs
- Leverage Technology

Strategic Planning Process





WHAT IS HIGH PERFORMANCE.....



Education and Community Benefit

- Critical Care Paramedic
- Community Paramedic
- Neonatal Pediatric Critical Care
- Certified Wilderness Paramedic

6

Daily Operations

Requirements

10A NCAC 13P .0201 https://info.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/rules/ems/011409/13P_0201.pdf

- County governments are mandated to establish EMS systems for the residents/visitors of their county
- The geographical area includes all land within the borders of the county including all public and private lands
  - 30% of Burke County is public lands including national forest or NC Parks/Wildlife
- The highest level of care must be available to all residents 24hrs a day by a minimum of One (1) EMS credentialed provider trained to operate within the defined scope and practice (G.S. 131E-158)
- G.S. 166A-19.15 establishes Local Emergency Management by the County including Search and Rescue response

https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_166A/GS_166A-19.15.pdf

7

Re-Organization Framework

THEN:

Fire Marshal & Emergency Mgt Director

1. Occupancy Permits
2. Fire Inspections/ Investigations
3. Fire Department ISO
4. Plan Reviews
5. Site Reviews
6. FD/County Liaison
7. SAR
8. EM Planning
   1. Training
   2. Exercises
9. EM Inspections
10. EM Equipment
11. HazMat Response

EMS

1. EMS Ops
2. Special Ops (Response)

NOW:

4 FTE

Fire Marshal

1. Occupancy Permits
2. Fire Inspections/ Investigations
3. Fire Department ISO
4. FD/County Liaison
5. Plan Reviews
6. Site Reviews
7. HazMat Response

102 FTE

Emergency Services

1. EMS Ops
2. Special Ops
3. SAR
4. EM Planning
   1. Training
   2. Exercises
5. EM Inspections
6. EM Equipment
7. HazMat Response

Re-Organization Framework

THEN:

Fire Marshal & Emergency Mgt Director

1. Deputy Fire Marshal
2. Inspector

1. Emergency Mgt. Planner

NOW:

Chief Fire Marshal

1. Deputy Fire Marshal
2. Inspector
3. Inspector/Admin

Emergency Services Director

1. Emergency Mgt Manager
2. Emergency Mgt Planner
3. EMS Staffing
   FT- 95 PT 20
4. Special Operations Team
   Made up of FT and PT staff

Daily Operations

Daily staffing

- BC Emergency Services includes EM and EMS
- BC EM has a Manager and Planner dedicated to EM functions
- BC EMS operates on 4 shifts
- Each shift works a 24/72 schedule and is lead by:
  - Shift Captain
  - Shift Lieutenant
  - Training Sergeant
    - 2 Field Training Officers (FTO's) on each shift help work with new employees and students
  - Special Operations team members are assigned to shifts (25-member team)
  - Events Medicine team members are assigned to shifts and work extra events

The Role of the Special Operations Team

- Emergency Management recognizes that there are 5 individual programs in the NC SAR System
  - Urban Search and Rescue
  - Swiftwater Search and Rescue (Deployable State Strike Team)
  - Helicopter Rescue
  - Mountain Rescue
  - Wilderness Search and Rescue



- Training courses and requirements for each are established by NCEM for standardization and safety

The Role of the Special Operations Team

Burke County Special Operations has team members trained to meet all needs in 4 of the 5 areas (No current NCHART Team Members)

Special Ops requires our team members to successfully complete the OSFM Technical Rescuer series course as well as the NC EM MSAR courses.

We partner with WPCC and utilize NC TERMS for courses

- **TR Ropes (FRC 1201) for 130 hours**
- **TR Common Passenger Vehicle (FRC 1207) for 40 hours**
- **TR Surface Water Rescue (FRC 1215) for 40 hours**
- **TR Swift Water Rescue (FRC 1216) for 40 hours**
- **Working on TR Trench Rescue (FRC 1213), TR Confined Space (FRC 1206), & TR Structural Collapse (FRC 1205)**

Events Team

- Crawdads Stadium
  - Provide event coverage for bystanders
- Hands only CPR at events and fire camps
- Job Fairs / Student Career Development
- Historic Morganton Festival
- Motorcross race events
- Foot races and Spartan Events
- Athletic event standbys for the school systems

- 489 encounters and opportunities to represent Burke County as an Employer of Choice

Operational Awareness

Decreasing volunteerism within communities is creating gaps in coverage and response

NC seen a 12% decrease in volunteers across the state including in fire departments and rescue squads

Increasing costs for equipment challenges volunteer agency budgets

Standard equipment prices have seen an increase of 30.3% on average since 2020

PPE has increased 44% on average since 2020

Apparatus cost have increased 70% on average since 2020

Increasing requirements for training

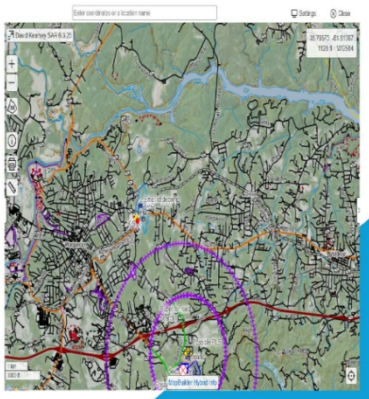
Firefighter certifications have increased in hours

The Technical Rescuer Series has been modified with an increase in hours

EMT and Paramedic classes have increased in hours

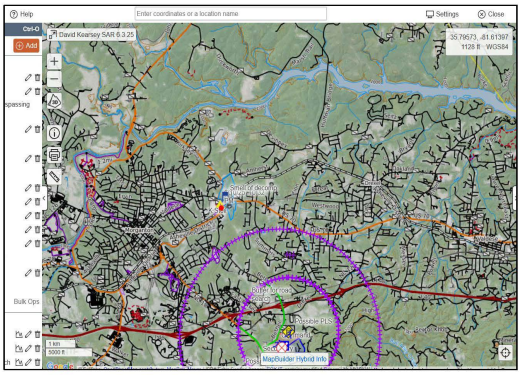
All of this has led to a decrease in participation, unless it becomes part of a profession

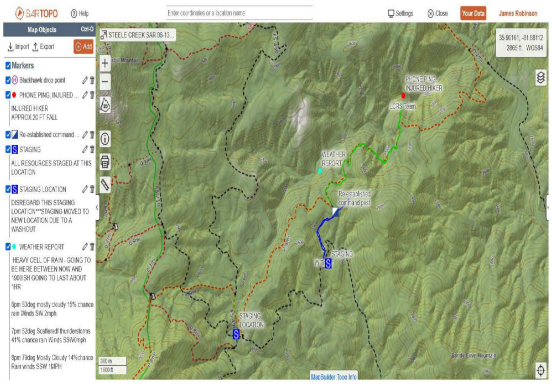
Search & Rescue Operations



SAR Statistics for Burke County

Annual SAR responses : 100-125 (average from previous years)
Manhours per response: 6.7 Average
Longest response this year: 16 hours
SAR's on Public Land (US/NC): 80%





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10 Essentials of Hiking



150 Day Achievements





Julie Biddix, Director, Sanstone Health and Rehabilitation, expressed her deep gratitude for the county's emergency response during the July 13th incident. She described the situation as extremely difficult but praised the responders for their calm professionalism, noting that they kept both residents and staff reassured and composed throughout the event. Ms. Biddix commended first responders for maintaining control, organizing responses effectively, and ensuring clear communication about which residents could be transported.

Mr. Robinson provided an update on the county's new trail marker system, which was discussed at the prior Board of Commissioners' meeting. He explained that installation of the markers is now underway, with large black signs being placed at trailheads in coordination with local trail partners. Smaller blue signs will be installed along trails at the discretion of each trail keeper. Mr. Robinson shared that the need for this system was reinforced by a recent rescue operation on a well-established trail where responders had difficulty locating an individual who could not provide a specific location. While cell phone pings can narrow down an area, they are not precise, making these markers critical for faster emergency response. Each blue sign will be geotagged in the county's SARTopo system, allowing emergency personnel to identify a caller's exact GPS location when they reference a trail marker number.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Barrier thanked Mr. Robinson and all involved in responding to the recent incident at Grace Heights Health & Rehabilitation, a 120-bed skilled nursing facility, then commented on the high costs associated with search and rescue operations, noting approximately $202,000 spent on overtime and estimating total expenses exceeding $300,000. He asked whether additional signage could be placed at popular trailheads in the Linville Gorge to warn inexperienced hikers of the dangers, similar to those seen at Grandfather Mountain.

Mr. Robinson explained that Linville Gorge is a federally designated wilderness area, where

signage and other man-made features are intentionally limited to preserve its natural and rugged character. He noted that signs cannot legally be placed more than 25 feet from the roadway, and any additional signage within the wilderness area is typically removed by trail keepers to maintain the area's protected status.

Commissioner Barrier remarked that the U.S. Forest Service does not reimburse the county for rescue expenses and suggested that they should contribute to those costs. Brian Epley, County Manager, added that a meeting with the Forest Service was scheduled for the following day, facilitated by Senator Tillis and Congressman Moore, to discuss the financial impact of these rescues. He noted that the county averages around 125 search and rescue missions per year—about 80% occurring in federal wilderness areas—with average response times of six (6) to seven (7) hours, resulting in substantial overtime and equipment costs.

Commissioner Stroud asked whether rescue operations, such as those requiring helicopters, were coordinated through a designated site at Jonas Ridge and if there was a helipad available. Mr. Robinson explained that while there is no permanent helipad, the county maintains a list of pre-marked landing zones within its communications system, including several large fields suitable for helicopter access.

Mr. Robinson further explained that helicopters are used only in life-or-limb situations and that authorization for military or specialized aircraft requires coordination with both North Carolina and South Carolina emergency management agencies, as well as federal approval. He described a recent challenging rescue mission that involved complex coordination among multiple agencies, including North Carolina Emergency Management. The mission required over 45 personnel and more than $1 million in equipment and assets, with estimated costs exceeding $500,000 if billed by runtime and fuel. The operation occurred during a thunderstorm, and the responding helicopter had only a 20-minute weather window to complete the extrication safely. Mr. Robinson emphasized that successful outcomes in such missions depend heavily on interagency partnerships and the dedication of both paid staff and volunteers.

The Assistant Fire Chief, Isreal Gibson of the City of Morganton Public Safety Department, thanked the Burke County Department of Emergency Services for their strong partnership and effective coordination during the Foothills Drive (Grace Heights) incident. He praised the improved interoperability between city and county agencies, crediting prior collaboration with Mr. Robinson for the smooth response.

County Manager Epley announced that each Commissioner received a copy today of the after-action report for this event.

Chairman Brittain commended the first responders for their response to the fire at Grace Heights, then called for a motion.

Motion: To accept the report as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Mike Stroud, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CM - MEG'S PLACE - INTRODUCTION

County Manager Epley introduced Amber Vest, Executive Founder and Director of the Live Like Megan Foundation, who presented information about the organization's initiative, Meg's Place, a home designed to support children in foster care who have no immediate placement. Founded in memory of her daughter, Megan, who passed away in 2020, Meg's Place provides a safe, homelike environment for children who might otherwise sleep in DSS offices. The home offers beds, food, play areas, and essential supplies to reduce trauma for displaced children and ease the burden on foster parents by providing items such as clothing, cribs, and car seats.

Ms. Vest noted that from June 2024 to June 2025, there were 169 overnight stays by children at the Burke County DSS office, including 109 nights so far this year, underscoring the need for a local Meg's Place. In addition to emergency housing, the foundation offers a resource center, support groups, and assistance programs for reunifying families and kinship caregivers. Meg's Place is currently operating in McDowell County and expanding into Yancey County, and she expressed interest in operating in Burke County as well. Ms. Vest concluded by emphasizing the foundation's commitment to tailoring services to Burke County's specific needs in collaboration with local DSS leadership.

Commissioner Barrier thanked Ms. Vest for her work with the Live Like Megan Foundation and noted that colleagues at McDowell County's DSS have spoken highly of the organization's impact. He mentioned that he is assisting in connecting her with local pastors and faith leaders and expressed his hope that Burke County can bring Meg's Place to the community. As a member of the Burke County DSS Advisory Board, he shared that while the local DSS has created a welcoming temporary space for children, it is still within a DSS building, and he looks forward to helping establish a dedicated facility like Meg's Place in Burke County.

County Manager Epley added that on August 14th at 8:00 a.m., the County will host a breakfast for pastors and faith leaders in the Commissioners' Meeting Room. He noted that last month's event featured One More One Less, a foster parent recruitment organization founded by a pastor in Cleveland County, and extended an invitation to Ms. Vest to share her story at the upcoming gathering. Mr. Epley emphasized that supporting foster care initiatives is a county priority and that efforts are focused on reducing the normalization of traumatic circumstances within the foster care system.

Commissioner Burns thanked Ms. Vest for her work, noting that when she described her organization's mission, it made him think of the phrase "love kids," which he said perfectly captures what they do. There being no further discussion, Chairman Brittain moved to the next item of business.

RESULT: NO ACTION TAKEN.

OVNCST – PRESENTATION OF GRANT MATCH FUNDS

Colonel Brian Oliver, representing the Overmountain Victory State Trail (OVST), addressed the Board of Commissioners to present a check for $160,130 in matching funds from the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The funds will support the Canal Bridge pedestrian walkway project, a segment of the OVST and Fonta Flora State Trail in Burke County. Col. Oliver commended Burke County for its strong trail development efforts and partnerships, highlighting the project's alignment with upcoming America 250 NC and semiquincentennial celebrations.

Following him, Dr. Bryant Lindsey, President of the OVST Board, noted Burke County's leadership in establishing a county committee early in the initiative, with now 81 counties participating statewide. He discussed coordination between the governor's office and the legislature to advance America 250 NC. Dr. Lindsey also drew attention to recent Western North Carolina grant awards, emphasizing that ongoing collaboration among counties and partners will strengthen the trail's impact regionally and statewide.



Depicted from left to right: Sarah Chabaane, Alan Glines, Commissioner Stroud, Commissioner Burns, Dr. Lindsey, Chairman Brittain, Col. Brian Oliver, Vice Chairman Smith, and Commissioner Barrier

Additional information from the agenda packet:

> The Canal Bridge Sidewalk Project involves the construction of a 480-foot pedestrian walkway on the existing bridge deck over NC 126, along with a crosswalk connecting to a planned trailhead. This segment serves as a vital connection between the Fonta Flora and Overmountain Victory State Trails and links the two (2) parcels of Lake James State Park. Since 2021, Burke County has partnered with Mattern & Craig Engineering to develop the project, which received formal design approval from NCDOT in November 2023. NCDOT will also serve as the lead agency for construction.
>
> The County submitted a Locally Administered Project Program (LAPP) grant application on April 30, 2024. The total project cost is $1,240,522, which includes a required 20% local cash match of $310,130.50. The Friends of the Fonta Flora State Trail (F3ST) and the Overmountain Victory North Carolina State Trail Friends Group (OVNCST) have committed to covering the full match amount. The County has already funded the engineering study and other non-match administrative costs. If additional match funding is needed, Duke CRA grant funds may be used.
>
> To recognize their contribution, representatives from OVNCST, Executive Director Col. Brian Oliver, and Board President Dr. Bryant Lindsey, have requested to appear before the Board at the July Commission meeting to ceremonially present a check, representing OVNCST's portion of the match. This presentation highlights the strong community partnership behind the

project. Advancing with the grant match will allow NCDOT to begin the next steps required for this exciting community asset.

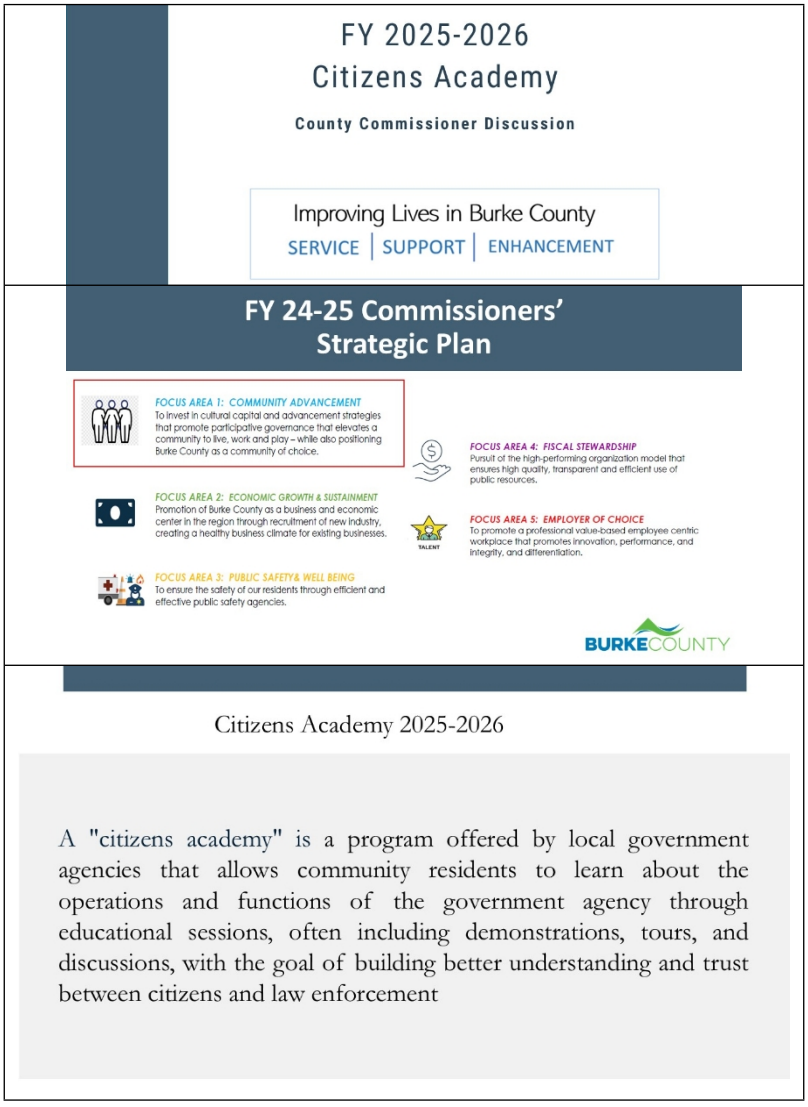
Budgetary Effect: N/A

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Vice Chairman Smith expressed gratitude to those who maintain and work on the trails in Burke County, including the OVST which is especially important to him.

RESULT: NO ACTION TAKEN.

CM - PRESENTATION ON CITIZENS ACADEMY

County Manager Epley presented information on Burke County's new Citizens Academy, scheduled to begin later this fall. The Citizens Academy is designed to raise public awareness and understanding of county government operations. Approval of the program is requested. Highlights of his presentation were as follows:



Citizens Academy 2025-2026

Program Goals:

1.Knowledge: *Improving citizens' understanding of local government while learning more about community issues and concerns.*

- Citizens get a hands-on and behind-the-scenes look at how services and programs are provided.
- Citizens better understand what is needed to run a municipality or county.
- Staff members hear directly from citizens about the realities of programs and operations.
- Staff members have the chance to hone their presentation skills.

Citizens Academy 2025-2026

Program Goals:

2.Involvement: *Improving the quality and quantity of citizen participation in local government.*

- Citizens learn how they can be more involved.
- Many citizens go on to become volunteers, including service on an appointed advisory board or committee.

Citizens Academy 2025-2026

Program Goals:

3.Public Relations: *Improving the lines of communication and relationship between citizens and their local government.*

- Citizens have the opportunity to connect with other citizens.
- Citizens and staff create relationships that foster enhanced communication.
- Alumni become informal ambassadors for the local government.

Citizens Academy 2025-2026

Burke County Citizens Academy:

- 10 Participants
  - Application-based and commissioner-selected
- 6 Weeks Long
- 90 Minute Sessions
- 1 Group in Fall / 1 Group in Spring

- September 11, 2025 – (5:30-7:00)

Citizens Academy 2025-2026

Week 1:Introduction to County Government

- Commissioner: Jeff Brittain
- Location: Commissioners' Chamber
- Topic: Burke County 101:
  - Commissioners strategic plan
  - Community profile and demographics
  - County administration
    - Human Resources
    - Information Technology
    - Finance and Budget

Week 2: Enterprise Funds

- Commissioner: Phil Smith
- Location: Landfill
- Departments:
  - Solid Waste
  - Water and Sewer

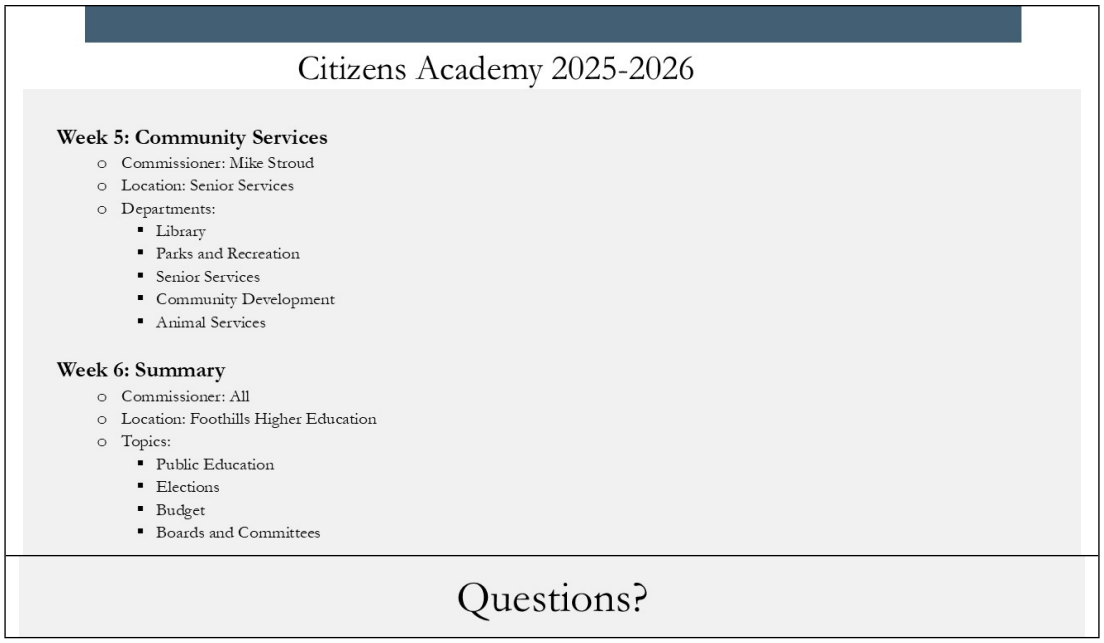
Citizens Academy 2025-2026

Week 3: Public Safety

- Location: 911
- Commissioner: Randy Burns
- Departments:
  - Sheriff
  - EMS
  - 911
  - Fire Marshal

Week 4: Human Services

- Commissioner: Brian Barrier
- Location: Health and DSS Building
- Departments:
  - Health
  - Social Services
  - Opioid



Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Stroud shared his positive experience participating in a Citizens Academy with Morganton Public Safety, noting that it was an eye-opening experience that provided valuable insight into their daily challenges. He commended the program as a great step toward transparency and public understanding, emphasizing that it fosters appreciation for the leadership that occurs behind the scenes. There being no further discussion, Chairman Brittain called for a motion.

Motion: To approve the Burke County Citizens Academy program as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS

CD - ZONING MAP AMENDMENT ZMA 2025-04 & PUBLIC HEARING - 6:00 P.M.

Alan Glines, Planning Director / Deputy County Manager, presented highlights of the following rezoning request:



ZONING MAP AMENDMENT - ZMA 2025-04

Applicant: Brian and Marissa Deegan
PIN: 1753-33-3286
Address: 3594 N Powerhouse Road, Morganton, NC
Request: Rezone approximately 4.58 acres from Conservation (CON) to Residential One (R-1)

REQUEST
Brian and Marissa Deegan have submitted a rezoning application to change the zoning designation of their

4.58-acre homesite from Conservation (CON) to Residential One (R-1). The applicant has stated that they would like to divide their property to add an additional lot for a single-family home consistent with R-1 zoning.

SITE ANALYSIS AND SURROUNDING AREA

The subject property, located on Lake James, contains the Deegans' residence and is accessed via North Powerhouse Road, a state-maintained road. It lies within the Linville Township, the Lake James Fire District, and the Lake James IV CA watershed.

Existing Zoning and Land Uses within the Surrounding Area		
	Current Zoning	Existing Land Uses
North	Lake James	Lake James
South	Conservation	Vacant- Duke Energy use
East	Conservation	Patty's Creek Dam area/ Duke
West	Conservation and Residential One	Single-family residential use

CURRENT ZONING

The subject parcel and adjacent tracts were formerly surplus property held by Crescent Communities, LLC. The Deegans' parcel was subdivided in 2015 from a larger 16-acre tract, with adjacent parcels created in 2016 ranging from 1.47 to 3.69 acres. In 2021, Burke County consolidated multiple Conservation zoning districts around Lake James into one unified district with a 3-acre minimum lot size. The 3-acre minimum applies when subdivisions are proposed.



Among six (6) parcels originating from this surplus tract, only two (2) meet the current 3-acre minimum. Other nearby properties visible from this location are zoned R-1. The proposed rezoning and subdivision align with the lot size and character of nearby development.

All parcels that have frontage on Lake James have similar lake buffering standards, which include a lakefront buffer for the first 50 feet from the lake and a secondary buffer of 50 feet that can have minor encroachments. The goal of these buffers is to retain the vegetative canopy and protect lake vistas. Some areas of the lake shoreline receive higher than normal erosion from wind-driven waves. In these situations, a shoreline stabilization plan prepared by a registered engineer may be submitted to Planning staff to resolve an erosion problem. Trees and shrubs that are removed during the stabilization are replanted with an approved planting plan.

ZONING DISTRICT DESCRIPTIONS

Conservation District - The Conservation District (CON) is focused on maintaining the rural character of the surrounding area with low-density residential development and other

commercial uses such as restaurants, retail, and campgrounds, all approved through a special use permit. The Conservation District (CON) may be considered more permissive from a land use standpoint because of the variety of different activities that may occur in the district. Although the name of the district seems to suggest there are extra precautions to manage land uses, conservation is applied with a limited list of commercial activities and typically larger lot minimums. An analysis of the parcels surrounding the Deegan's tract shows that smaller lot sizes below the minimum standard in Conservation are not uncommon.

Residential One - The Residential One (R-1) district is the most limited residential district in Burke County. Only stick-built or modular homes and a limited number of community services are permitted in the district. Lakefront parcels will also comply with shoreline buffering requirements previously noted.

CONFORMITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The current land use plan for Burke County is the 2022-2030 Blueprint Burke Strategic Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Map has the subject parcel in the *Lake James Scenic* land use category. The Lake James Scenic category recognizes and recommends single-family residential uses, lake-focused commercial activities, and other uses by special approval. The requested zoning of R-1 is consistent with the future land use map. The Burke County Commissioners have supported residential expansion in Burke County.



STAFF COMMENTS

Staff finds the request to be reasonable and consistent with the surrounding land uses and the county's comprehensive plan. The requested change is consistent with other land uses adjacent to the parcel and in the surrounding area of Lake James. The proposed rezoning would support the continuation of single-family development in an area where similar uses and lot sizes are already established.

PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board met on Thursday, June 26, 2025, to consider the request. A representative of the applicant spoke in favor of the request and explained the shoreline stabilization activities that have occurred at this specific parcel to repair severe erosion. Another individual spoke against further development of this parcel and around the lake in general. The Chairman closed the public hearing and asked for a motion. A motion was made to recommend approval of the rezoning request with a vote of 6-0.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he opened the public hearing at 7:26 p.m. The Public Hearing Notice was published in the News Herald on July 10 and July 17, 2025. Further, the notice was also posted on the County's website (www.burkenc.org) on July 10, 2025. There being no one present to address the Board, the public hearing was closed at 7:26 p.m.

Motion: To adopt Ordinance No. 2025-09 as it relates to ZMA 2025-04 for the parcel corresponding to PIN 1753-33-3286 to rezone a single parcel from Conservation (CON) to Residential One (R-1). The request is reasonable and in the public interest because:

- **The request is in keeping with the character of the other residential uses adjacent to and in the surrounding neighborhood of this parcel.**
- **The Blueprint Burke Strategic Land Use Plan supports and recommends additional single-family uses in the Lake James Scenic Overlay future land use category.**

RESULT:	**ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Ordinance No. 2025-09 reads as follows:

Burke County
North Carolina

An Ordinance Amending the Official Burke County Zoning Map
ZMA 2025-04

Be it ordained that the Official Burke County Zoning Map is hereby amended as follows:

A single parcel totaling 4.58 acres located at 3594 N Powerhouse Road, Morganton, N.C., and identified by PIN: 1753-33-3286 shall be rezoned from the Conservation (CON) district to Residential One (R-1).

Consistency Statement

The Commissioners find that Ordinance No. 2025-09 related to rezoning application ZMA 2025-04 and located at 3594 N Powerhouse Road, Morganton, N.C., to be consistent with the Blueprint Burke Strategic Plan and the Future Land Use map because it shows this property in the Lake James Scenic land category. The Lake James Scenic future land use category supports

a mix of uses, including single-family development, along with a limited list of lake-focused commercial uses. Furthermore, the Blueprint Burke Plan and the Burke Commissioner's Strategic Plan support the creation of housing units throughout the County. The rezoning request is consistent with the character of the area.

Adopted this 21st day of July 2025.

/s/: Jeffrey C. Brittain
Jeffrey C. Brittain Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:
/s/: Kay Honeycutt Draughn
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board

RECESS OF THE MEETING
Chairman Brittain called for a brief recess at 7:27 pm., and the meeting resumed at 7:33 p.m.

INFORMAL PUBLIC COMMENTS
Chairman Brittain opened the floor for informal public comments and asked speakers to limit their comments to three (3) minutes.

Cindy Brown, Catawba County resident, explained that she is a paramedic with 20 years of experience in critical care, teaching, and hospice, and spoke in support of Hochoka Retreat Center as a vital resource for emotional healing and stress recovery for first responders, healthcare workers, and veterans. She shared her personal experience with burnout and the challenges of processing traumatic events from long shifts, explaining that Hochoka Retreat Center provides equine therapy and interaction with animals to help participants reset their nervous systems, manage stress, and improve overall quality of life. Ms. Brown emphasized the importance of such programs in preventing long-term dysfunction and supporting both professional effectiveness and personal well-being.

Joseph Tate, a volunteer and board member at Hochoka Retreat Center, spoke in support of the organization, highlighting its work in equine therapy, rehabilitative services, and housing assistance for Burke County residents. He described how the center helps individuals with mental illness, PTSD, developmental challenges, and homelessness, fostering healing, personal growth, and stability. Mr. Tate urged the county to grant Hochoka Retreat Center tax-exempt status to align with its federal 501(c)(3) designation and to resolve property value assessment issues, allowing the organization to focus its efforts on serving the community rather than engaging in administrative disputes.

Marsha Love, Elkin resident, a board member of Hochoka Retreat Center, and lifelong friend of Ms. Clarke, spoke in support of the nonprofit, emphasizing its mission to help and heal disadvantaged individuals, including those with disabilities, PTSD, or experiencing homelessness. She described the organization as a small, volunteer-driven operation that relies on donations and charity, with no profit or paid staff. Ms. Love highlighted plans to create transitional housing for individuals aging out of foster care or in need of life skills, but noted

that Burke County's delay in granting tax-exempt status—including high valuations on essential farm items—has hindered progress. She requested that the county promptly address Hochoka's tax-exemption request so the organization can continue its community-focused work.

Kimberly Clarke, founder of Healing with Horses and a Native American (Nes Pierce), spoke during public comment regarding allegations that Burke County was delaying in addressing the organization's tax-exemption status. She emphasized that the nonprofit has been wrongfully taxed for two (2) years, despite repeated letters to the county and outreach through legal counsel. Ms. Clarke expressed frustration over the lack of response, stating that the delay has strained the farm's resources and caused emotional distress. She stressed that the organization seeks resolution, not conflict, and requested clarity on when the county would make a decision.

County Attorney Destin Hall noted that there was a pending lawsuit regarding Hochoka Retreat Center's tax-exemption status and that communications have been ongoing with the plaintiff's counsel, Mr. Grant, in hopes of reaching a resolution. Ms. Clarke responded directly, stating that she can speak for herself, emphasized that the matter has been delayed for three (3) years, and expressed frustration that the county had not reached a resolution in the matter. She asserted that she was last advised by her attorney that the decision was in County Manager Epley's hands. Ms. Clarke explained that the delay is draining the farm's resources and called for an end to the legal back-and-forth. As her time had expired, and there was no one else to address the Board, Chairman Brittain closed this portion of the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA – NONE

ITEMS FOR DECISION

SHERIFF - RESOLUTION DONATING AND SURPLUS PROPERTY
Banks Hinceman, Sheriff, requested approval for the following:

1. Donation of a 2019 Dodge Charger front brush guard and a 2016 Ford Explorer guard to the Drexel Police Department.
2. Donation of a 2021 Ford Explorer dog kennel to the City of Lenoir.
3. Donation of an old-model MDT computer stand to the Glen Alpine Police Department.
4. Accept a donation of an in-car cage from the City of Lenoir.

The brush guards, dog kennel, and computer stand are fully depreciated assets. All transfers—both donations and the receipt—are in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 160A-274, which authorizes the sale, lease, or donation of personal property between government entities.

Budgetary Effect: None.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To adopt Resolution No. 2025-23.

RESULT:	**ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Brian Barrier, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Resolution No. 2025-23 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

RESOLUTION APPROVING CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY TO
ANOTHER UNIT OF GOVERNMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA
PURSUANT TO N.C.G.S. § 160A-274

WHEREAS, the County of Burke owns three (3) XTS 2500 radios that are no longer needed and declared as surplus property by the County Manager:

- One 2019 Dodge Charger Front Brush Guard
- One 2016 Ford Explorer Brush Guard
- One MDT (Mobile Data Terminal) computer stand (old model)
- One 2021 Ford Explorer Dog Kennel; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute § 160A-274 authorizes a governmental unit in this state to exchange with, lease to, lease from, sell to, or purchase from any other governmental unit any interest in real or personal property upon such terms and conditions as the governmental unit deems wise, with or without consideration; and

WHEREAS, the County of Burke has determined that it is in the best interest of the County to:

- Convey the 2019 Dodge Charger front brush guard and the 2016 Ford Explorer brush guard to the Drexel Police Department and deem it wise to do so for no consideration and for public use.
- Convey the MDT computer stand to the Glen Alpine Police Department and deem it wise to do so for no consideration and for public use.
- Convey the 2021 Ford Explorer dog kennel to the City of Lenoir and deem it wise to do so for no consideration and for public use.

THEREFORE, THE BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RESOLVES THAT:

1. The County of Burke hereby conveys the following items to the Drexel Police Department for no consideration and for public use:
   a. 2019 Dodge Charger Front Brush Guard
   b. 2016 Ford Explorer Brush Guard
2. The County of Burke hereby conveys the following item to the Glen Alpine Police Department for no consideration and for public use:
   a. MDT Computer Stand
3. The County of Burke hereby conveys the following item to the City of Lenior for no consideration and for public use:
   a. 2021 Ford Explorer Dog Kennel
4. The County of Burke hereby accepts the following item from the City of Lenior for no consideration and for public use:
   a. In-car cage.
5. The conveyances described above shall occur upon adoption of this resolution.

6. The Chairman of the Burke County Board of Commissioners and the County Manager are authorized to execute all documents necessary to carry out these actions as authorized by this Resolution.

Adopted this 21st day of July 2025.

/s/: Jeffrey C. Brittain
Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

Attest:
/s/: Kay Honeycutt Draughn
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board

AAA - HOME & COMMUNITY CARE BLOCK GRANT FY 25-26

Sarah Evitt, Aging Program Manager, WPCOG, reported that each year, Burke County receives funds through the Home and Community Care Block Grant ("HCCBG") program for the provision of services to the County's older adults. The Burke County Council on Aging, working with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners as to the use of these funds. The recommendations of the Burke County Council on Aging, serving as the HCCBG advisory committee, are listed below. The new recommended agency for medical transportation is Catawba Valley Medical Services for FY 25 - 26.

HCCBG ALLOCATIONS - SFY 2026

BURKE COUNTY

SERVICE	PROVIDER	STATE/FEDERAL FUNDS	LOCAL MATCH	FY26 BUDGET
Adult Day Care	Blue Ridge Community Action	$95,400	$10,600	$106,000
Congregate Meals	Burke County Senior Services	$7,957	$884	$8,841
Home Del. Meals	Burke County Senior Services	$129,378	$14,375	$143,753
Sr. Center Operations	Burke County Senior Services	$49,037	$5,449	$54,486
Housing & Home Imp.	Foothills Service Project, Inc.	$117,000	$13,000	$130,000
Med. Transportation	Catawba Valley Medical Services	$51,295	$5,699	$56,994
In-Home Aide, Level II	Catawba Valley Medical Services	$61,400	$6,822	$68,222
In-Home Aide, Level III	Catawba Valley Medical Services	$147,047	$16,339	$163,386
General Transportation	Greenway	$10,799	$1,200	$11,999
TOTAL		**$669,313**	**$74,368**	**$743,681**

Budget approved by Burke Council on Aging 4/23/2025
Projected Budget as of 6-26-25

Budgetary Effect: The grant requires a 10% local match, which is the responsibility of the provider organization. The $669,313 allocation, which is the same as the prior FY, includes no change to the local match.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a

motion.

Motion: To approve the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) funding allocations as recommended by the Burke County Council on Aging and approve the HCCBG agreement between Burke County and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging for FY 25 - 26, subject to review and / or revision by the County Attorney. Further, authorize the Chairman to execute the aforementioned documents.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

BOC - DESIGNATION OF VOTING DELEGATE AT NCACC CONFERENCE

Chairman Brittain requested the designation of himself as the Board's voting delegate and Vice Chairman Smith as the alternate voting delegate for the NCACC Annual Conference in August was requested.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a motion.

Motion: To approve the designation of Chairman Brittain as Burke County's voting delegate and Vice Chairman Smith as the alternate voting delegate for the NCACC Annual Conference in August 2025.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Brian Barrier, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CLERK - REAPPOINTMENT TO BDI (BURKE DEVELOPMENT, INC.)

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, stated that the County appoints three (3) members to the BDI Board. Seat No. 1 is for the Burke Co. Chairman or his designee, Seat No. 2 is for the County Manager, and Seat No. 3 is an at-large seat occupied by Jim Toner of Morganton. Mr. Toner's term has expired, and he was not seeking reappointment. The term is for three (3) years, and there are several applications on file.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for a nomination. Vice Chairman Smith nominated Mike Watts; there being no further nominations, Chairman Brittain opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To appoint Mike Watts to BDI Seat No. 3, at-large, to complete the remainder of a term ending December 31, 2027.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CLERK - APPOINTMENT TO BURKE SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY COUNCIL

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, reported that the purpose of the BSCAC is to advise the Burke County Board of Commissioners regarding the operation of the Senior Center and to make recommendations on programs and future growth.

The terms of appointment of some of the Burke Senior Center Advisory Council members ended in March. The following action is requested:

Seat No. 1 - Remove Michael Queen and thank him for his many years of service.
Seat No. 4 - Reappoint Barbara Houston.
Seat No. 5 - Reappoint Susan Janney.
Seat No. 6 - Reappoint Guinn Huffman.
Seats No. 2 and 7 are currently vacant. The Senior Center is actively seeking applicants.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he opened the floor for a motion.

Motions: To remove Mr. Michael Queen from the Burke Senior Center Advisory Council, Seat No. 1, and thank him for his many years of service to the community. To reappoint Barbara Houston to the Burke Senior Center Advisory Council, Seat No. 4, to complete the remainder of a term ending March 31, 2027. To reappoint Susan Janney to the Burke Senior Center Advisory Council, Seat No. 5, and Guinn Huffman to Seat No. 6, to complete the remainder of terms ending March 31, 2028.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CLERK - REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE ANIMAL ADVISORY BOARD

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, noted that the terms of appointment end July 31st for the following AAB members: Dr. Jennifer "Jenni" McGrady (Seat No. 2 - Vet), Debbie Hawkins (Seat No. 4 - at-large pet owner), Liz Boyd-Oliver (Seat No. 6 - Breeder), and Adam Abernethy (Seat No. 8 - Large Animal Owner). The purpose of the 8-member advisory board is to advise the county commissioners, county manager, and the animal services director on matters related to the organization and operation of the county animal services department. The terms are for two (2) years.

Seat No. 2: Dr. Jenni McGrady is seeking reappointment. Her application is on file.
Seat No. 4: Debbie Hawkins is seeking reappointment. Her application is on file.
Seat No. 6: Liz Oliver is not seeking reappointment. An application is on file from Linda Arriaga, who is a breeder with 35 years of experience.
Seat No. 8: Adam Abernethy is not seeking reappointment.

Motion: To reappoint Dr. Jenni McGrady to the Animal Advisory Board, Seat No. 2 (vet.) for a term ending July 31, 2027. To reappoint Debbie Hawkins, Seat No. 4 (at-large pet owner), to the Animal Advisory Board, for a term ending July 31, 2027. To remove Liz Boyd-Oliver's name from the official roster for the Animal Advisory Board and thank her for her service to the community. To appoint Linda Arriga to Seat No. 6 (breeder) to the Animal Advisory Board, for a term ending July 31, 2027. To remove Adam Abernethy's name from the official roster for the Animal Advisory Board and thank him for his service to the community.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Mike Stroud, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CLERK - APPOINTMENTS TO THE REGIONAL AGING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, explained that the Older Americans Act of 1965 requires Area Agencies on Aging to establish an advisory council consisting of older individuals to advise the Area Agency on all matters relating to the development of an area / regional plan on aging and the administration of the plan and the operations conducted under the plan. At least 51% of advisory council members must be age 60+ and include minority individuals as well as individuals residing in rural areas. Advisory Council Members are appointed by County Commissions from each of the four (4) counties that comprise Region E (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba).

The current council consists of 16 members who assist the Area Agency on Aging by providing direction for programming and services for adults ages 60 and over who reside in the region. The council meets quarterly at the Western Piedmont Council of Governments in Hickory. Council members serve as the "eyes and ears" of their communities and must be aware of the needs of older adults in their respective counties, as well as being familiar with existing services / programs that may prove beneficial to the senior population.

4	Stephanie Berry	A-UT	2/19/2019
		R	7/16/2019
		R	8/17/2021
		R	6/20/2023
		TE	6/30/2025

This was a request to appoint Joset Taylor to Seat No. 4, which was occupied by Stephanie Berry. Ms. Berry has served the maximum number of terms allowed.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a motion.

Motion: To appoint Joset Taylor to Seat No. 4 on the Regional Aging Advisory Board to complete the remainder of a term ending June 30, 2027.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CLERK - APPOINTMENT TO THE AMERICA 250 NC COMMITTEE

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, explained that Patricia Wells' term as Regent for the Quaker Meadows Chapter of the NSDAR concluded on May 10, 2025. As a result, she resigned from the America 250 NC Committee in April 2025. An application was submitted by Dr. Sylvia Medford, a Burke County native and the current 2025-2027 Regent of the Quaker Meadows Chapter, NSDAR.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To appoint Dr. Sylvia Medford to the America 250th Planning Committee,

representing Seat No. 10, the Daughters of the American Revolution, to complete the remainder of a 3-year term ending April 15, 2028.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CLERK - REAPPOINTMENTS & REMOVALS TO THE CPCFPT (CHILD PROTECTION CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION TEAM)

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, noted that the 15-member Local Child Fatality Review Team is required to review all child deaths under age 18 that fall within specified categories, including those due to undetermined causes, injuries, violence, motor vehicle incidents, child maltreatment, sudden infant death, suicide, and other unexpected or qualifying infant deaths. They may also review other child deaths and active child protective services cases at the request of the DSS director. Additionally, teams must participate in periodic training and follow best practices as outlined by the State Office.

Effective July 1, 2025, each Local Child Fatality Review Team in North Carolina must include representatives from public and private agencies serving children and families, with specific required members such as DSS and public health directors, law enforcement, prosecutors, educators, mental health professionals, and others. The team may include up to five (5) additional ad hoc members per case at the chair's discretion, and State Office staff may serve as ex officio members. Teams must meet at least twice annually, elect a chair, and the chair is responsible for scheduling meetings, setting the agenda, and completing State Office training before presiding. To comply with the new legislation, the removal of the five (5) at-large seats from the county's roster is requested, along with recognizing Chris Jernigan, Chris Norman, Beth Bruder, Dillon Smith, and Damion Patton for their service. These members are encouraged to serve as ad hoc ex officio members if needed.

The term of appointment for Kathy Smith (parent of child who died before 18) on the Child Protection Child Fatality Review Team ended April 30, 2025. Ms. Smith, a Caldwell County resident, has served on this committee since 2016 and is willing to continue her service. An exception from the residency requirement, Sec. 2-88(a) of the county code, was requested.

15	Parent of a Child	Kathy Smith	A	7/19/2016
	Died Before 18	3097 Spencer Trail	R	6/18/2019
		Lenoir NC 28645	R	11/15/2022
			TE	4/30/2025

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To remove the at-large seats on the CPCFPT roster due to legislative changes and thank Chris Jernigan, Chris Norman, Beth Bruder, Dillon Smith, and Damion Patton for their service. To reappoint Kathy Smith to the CPCFPT, Seat No. 15, to complete the remainder of a term ending April 30, 2028, and grant an exception to Section 2-88(a), residency requirement, of the Burke County Code.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Brian Barrier, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CD - APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR PROVIDING PLANNING & ZONING SERVICES TO THE TOWN OF GLEN ALPINE

Alan Glines, Planning Director / Deputy County Manager, relayed that the Town of Glen Alpine has requested that Burke County assist with the administration of its planning and zoning services. Burke County Community Development already provides similar support to the Town of Connelly Springs. Given the relatively low volume of planning and zoning activity in Glen Alpine, this additional responsibility can be absorbed without requiring new staff or significantly impacting current operations. This agreement will formalize the County's support by outlining the scope of services to be provided to Glen Alpine.

Budgetary Effect: Increased revenue in the amount of $12,500.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a motion.

Motion: To approve the contract between Glen Alpine and Burke County for Planning and Zoning Services. Further, authorize the County Manager to execute all related documents, subject to review and/or revision by the County Attorney.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Brian Barrier, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT - $177,000

Brian Epley, County Manager, reported that Burke County Emergency Management has been awarded a $177,000 grant from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety through the State Emergency Management Local Emergency Shelter Capacity Grant Program. This funding will support infrastructure improvements at three (3) local emergency shelter sites: FHEC (Foothills Higher Education Center), Oak Hill Methodist Church, and First Baptist Hildebran Family Life Center.

The project scope includes site assessments, procurement and installation of critical equipment to expand power capacity, staff training, and the development of a long-term maintenance plan. Specific improvements include installing three-phase connection boxes at all sites, a generator at FHEC, and a transfer switch at First Baptist Hildebran.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 1			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-46504-01-433200-	NCEM REVENUE	$177,000	
EXPENSES			
100-46504-10-575000-	CAPITAL EQUIPMENT	$177,000	

Budgetary Effect: $177,000 in grant revenue and expenses; no County match is required.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a motion.

Motion: To approve Budget Amendment No. 1 in the amount of $177,000 as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Budget Amendment No. 1 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 1
FY 25-26

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 1			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-46504-01-433200-	NCEM REVENUE	$177,000	
EXPENSES			
100-46504-10-575000-	CAPITAL EQUIPMENT	$177,000	
Purpose: To recognize $177,000 in grant funding awarded to Burke County Emergency Management by the NC Department of Public Safety for infrastructure improvements at three (3) local emergency shelter sites. Funds will support equipment installation, power capacity upgrades, staff training, and maintenance planning to enhance shelter readiness.			
A copy of these amendments shall be furnished to the Budget Officer and the Finance Officer of the County to be kept on file for direction in the disbursement of funds.			

Approved this 21st day of July 2025.

/s/: Jeffrey C. Brittain
Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:
/s/: Kay Honeycutt Draughn
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT - $200,000

Brian Epley, County Manager, explained that Burke County had been awarded a Building Reuse Grant from the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division, in support of Maynard Electric Company / Project Piano. They have met the State's job creation

requirement, so the funding can be drawn down and passed onto the company.

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 2			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-65061-01-433494-	NCDOC REVENUE	$200,000	
EXPENSES			
100-65061-40-554300-	CAPITAL	$200,000	

Budgetary Effect: $200,000 in additional revenues and expenses. No County match is required.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a motion.

Motion: To approve Budget Amendment No. 2 in the amount of $200,000 as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Budget Amendment No. 2 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 2
FY 25-26

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 2			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-65061-01-433494-	NCDOC REVENUE	$200,000	
EXPENSES			
100-65061-40-554300-	CAPITAL	$200,000	
Purpose: To recognize grant funding awarded to Burke County by the NC Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division, through the Building Reuse Program in support of Maynard Electric Company / Project Piano.			
A copy of these amendments shall be furnished to the Budget Officer and the Finance Officer of the County to be kept on file for direction in the disbursement of funds.			

Approved this 21st day of July 2025.

/s/: Jeffrey C. Brittain
Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:
/s/: Kay Honeycutt Draughn
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board

CM - RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE ON REVALUATION

Brian Epley, County Manager, presented a brief overview of the revaluation process and timeline, in addition to requesting the creation of a limited lifespan task force of citizens to work alongside as part of the 2027 revaluation process. Highlights of his presentation were as follows:



NCDOR Reappraisal Timelines

Reappraisal Year		
2025	2026	2027
CARTERET	AVERY	MACON
JACKSON	CLAY	MOORE
DARE	DAVIDSON	WATAUGA
NEW HANOVER	MITCHELL	BRUNSWICK
BUNCOMBE	HARNETT	CATAWBA
POLK	PAMLICO	HENDERSON
HAYWOOD	ONSLOW	ASHE
SURRY	CHOWAN	RUTHERFORD
UNION	GUILFORD	ALAMANCE
TRANSYLVANIA	PENDER	MECKLENBURG
STANLY	ANSON	LINCOLN
BEAUFORT	BLADEN	IREDELL
CALDWELL		RANDOLPH
WILKES		BURKE
JOHNSTON		MCDOWELL
FORSYTH		ROWAN
CLEVELAND		GRAHAM
STOKES		ALLEGHANY
PERSON		GASTON
CHATHAM		LEE
DAVIE		YADKIN
DUPLIN		HERTFORD
WAYNE		SCOTLAND
DURHAM		
CUMBERLAND		
MARTIN		
WARREN		
GATES		
LENOIR		
ORANGE		
TYRRELL		
31	12	23

Revaluation Analysis..... § 105-286 : Timing

- (1) Every county in North Carolina must reappraise all real property at least once every eight years.
- (2) Optional Advancement – a county may, at the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners, conduct an earlier reappraisal.
  - NC DOR - Recommends that counties adopt, if possible, a four-year schedule.
  - Burke County has opted to use the four-year schedule.
    - The last county-wide reappraisal was 2023.
    - The next scheduled reappraisal is 2027.

Revaluation Analysis

What is Revaluation?

Levy Type	Valuation	% of Values	Valuation Schedule
Real	$ 8,760,340,598	79%	Revaluation
Personal	$ 885,291,929	8%	Annually
Motor Vehicles	$ 998,190,352	9%	Annually
State Boards	$ 422,326,236	4%	Annually

N.C.G.S. 105-286
- Conducted at least every eight (8) years
- Or – when sales ratio (< .85%) or (>1.15%)

NCDOR Sales Ratio

An NCDOR sales ratio refers to the Sales Assessment Ratio used by the North Carolina Department of Revenue (NCDOR) to measure how closely a property's assessed value (for tax purposes) matches its market value (as determined by an actual sale).

Sales Ratio = (Assessed Value ÷ Sale Price) × 100

This ratio expresses the assessed value as a percentage of the sale price.

Let's say a property sold for $250,000, but its county-assessed value is $225,000 from the 2023 revaluation:

- Sales Ratio = (225,000 ÷ 250,000) × 100 = 90%

The NCDOR uses these ratios to:

1. Monitor county property assessments to ensure fairness and uniformity.
2. Determine when counties need to revalue properties (typically every 4–8 years).
3. Inform state aid or funding formulas that rely on equitable taxation.
4. Help identify undervaluation or overvaluation trends across counties.

BURKE COUNTY MLS DATA

Burke County

North Carolina

	March			Year to Date		
Key Metrics	**2023**	**2024**	Percent Change	**Thru 3-2023**	**Thru 3-2024**	Percent Change
New Listings	97	**106**	+ 9.3%	229	**266**	+ 16.2%
Pending Sales	88	**88**	0.0%	216	**217**	+ 0.5%
Closed Sales	76	**63**	- 17.1%	167	**160**	- 4.2%
Median Sales Price*	$233,825	**$270,000**	+ 15.5%	$245,000	**$240,000**	- 2.0%
Average Sales Price*	$266,269	**$277,723**	+ 4.3%	$286,222	**$275,528**	- 3.7%
Percent of Original List Price Received*	95.4%	**95.0%**	- 0.4%	95.4%	**93.9%**	- 1.6%
List to Close	93	**79**	- 15.1%	88	**82**	- 6.8%
Days on Market Until Sale	36	**38**	+ 5.6%	40	**41**	+ 2.5%
Cumulative Days on Market Until Sale	41	**41**	0.0%	45	**44**	- 2.2%
Average List Price	$326,943	**$403,223**	+ 23.3%	$315,098	**$357,859**	+ 13.6%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	107	**158**	+ 47.7%	--	--	--
Months Supply of Inventory	1.6	**2.4**	+ 50.0%	--	--	--

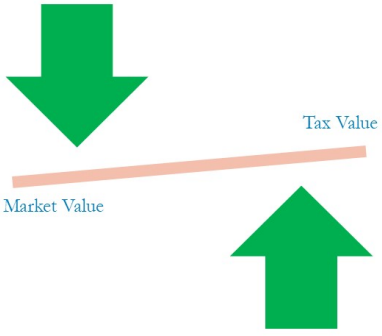
* Does not account for sale concessions and/or downpayment assistance. | Percent changes are calculated using rounded figures and can sometimes look extreme due to small sample s

BURKECOUNTY
ALL ABOUT ADVANCING

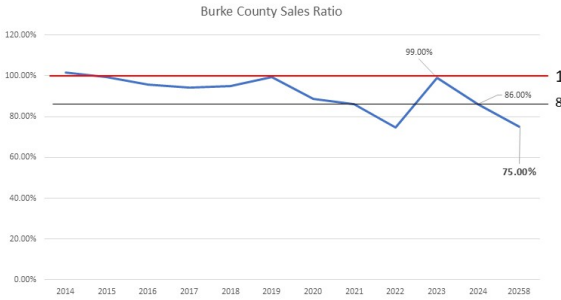
Sales Ratio & Revaluation - § 105-286: Methodology

Market Value is:

1. The price estimated in terms of money
2. At which the property would change hands
3. Between a willing buyer - And a willing seller.

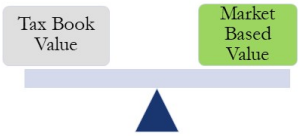


Revaluation Analysis

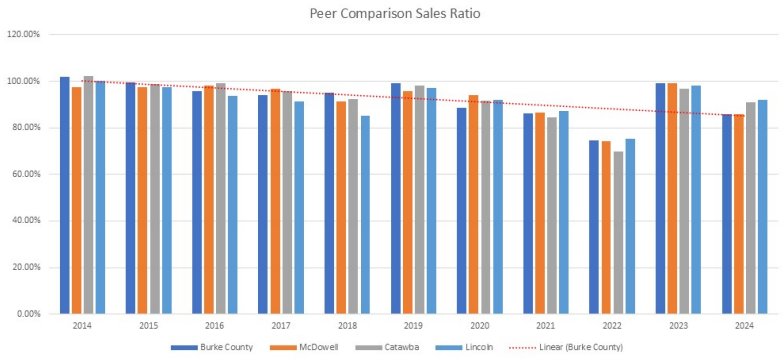


100% = Market Value

85%



Peer Comparison Sales Ratio



Revaluation Analysis..... **Variable Outcomes**

Tax Rate **X** **Property Value** **=** **Tax Levy**

2027 Revaluation Citizen Task Force

- A task force of non-elected citizens who help oversee, advise on, and communicate the goals and progress of a property revaluation project.

  - **Increase Transparency**: Ensure the revaluation process is open and understandable to the public.
  - **Build Trust**: Represent the community and build public confidence in the fairness of the process.
  - **Educate the Public**: Help explain why a revaluation is being done, how property taxes are affected, and how values are determined.
  - **Provide Feedback**: Relay public concerns or questions to county staff and officials.
  - **Advise on Policy or Outreach**: Recommend ways to improve communication with residents.

7 Member Task Force:

1. Actively employed in real estate, property appraisal, or tax administration
2. A licensed General Contractor
3. Actively employed in insurance, risk management, or banking
4. Actively engaged in commercial farming or agriculture production
5. A citizen over the age of 55
6. At Large
7. At Large

Schedule of Values

- Required under **NC General Statute § 105-317**.
- Must be **adopted by the Board of County Commissioners** before a general reappraisal becomes effective.
- A copy must be made available for public inspection and is often published online.
- The SOV must be **approved before notices of new values are sent** to property owners.



Schedule of Values

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1. Valuation Standards	2. Land Valuation Tables	3. Cost Tables for Improvements (Buildings, Structures)
Definitions and principles used in mass appraisal. Explanation of **"market value"** as defined in G.S. 105-283.	Valuation by neighborhood or land class. Base rates per acre/square foot depending on zoning, location, or use (residential, commercial, etc.).	Base cost per square foot by building type (ranch, colonial, commercial warehouse, etc.). •Adjustments for: •Size •Age (depreciation) •Construction quality (e.g., economy, average, excellent) •Features (garages, pools, porches, finished basements)

Schedule of Values

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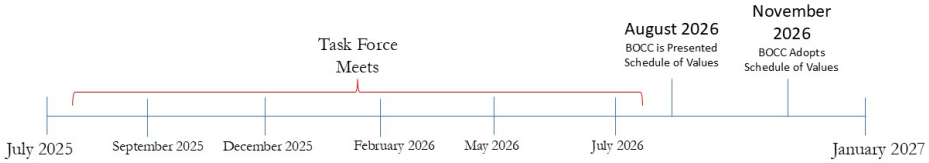
4. Adjustment Tables	5. PUV Criteria
Location factors Neighborhood adjustments Economic obsolescence factors Topography, accessibility, and utility availability	Standards for qualifying farmland, horticulture, or forest land. Use-value rates per acre for these land types are typically much lower than market value.

Schedule of Values - Example

Land Use Type	Base Value per Acre	Notes
Urban Residential	$50,000	Flat, utility access
Forest Land (PUV)	$400	Enrolled in present-use program

Property Type	Base Cost per Sq. Ft.	Quality Grade	Depreciation Adjustment
Residential (Ranch)	$110/sf	Average	-20% (25 years old)
Commercial Retail	$150/sf	Good	-10% (10 years old)

Revaluation 2027 Timeline



Sales Data For Land Sales
Evaluation of Construction Costs
Defining Market Areas/Neighborhoods
Evaluation of Property Characteristics
PUV Tables
Adjustment Tables

Additional information from the agenda packet:

> The proposed resolution establishes a seven (7) member Burke County Revaluation Task Force to serve in an advisory role during the 2027 countywide property revaluation process. The task force will promote transparency, gather public input, and support community understanding of revaluation procedures. Members must be Burke County residents and will serve two-year terms. Meetings will comply with the North Carolina Open Meetings Law, and the task force will operate in accordance with all applicable state statutes and administrative code.

Budgetary Effect: N.A.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a motion.

Motion: To adopt Resolution No. 2025-21.

RESULT:	**ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Resolution No. 2025-21 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING
THE BURKE COUNTY REVALUATION TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, the Burke County Board of Commissioners recognizes the importance of public transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in the administration of the 2027 countywide property revaluation process; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statutes § 105-286 and associated provisions of the North Carolina Administrative Code require counties to conduct periodic revaluations of real property to ensure equitable taxation and compliance with applicable laws and standards; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to establish a citizen-led task force to serve in an advisory capacity to promote community understanding of the revaluation process and to enhance oversight and public confidence in the procedures undertaken.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THAT:

Section 1. Establishment

There is hereby established a seven-member citizen task force to be known as the Burke County Revaluation Task Force ("the Task Force").

Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Task Force is to:

- Provide community input during the development of the revaluation schedule, statistical tables, mass appraisal documents, schedule of values, and all other relevant materials needed to perform the 2027 countywide revaluation process;

- Serve as a conduit for public concerns, questions, and feedback;

- Promote transparency by reviewing timelines, procedures, and public communication efforts; and

- Report findings and recommendations to the Burke County Tax Office and the Board of Commissioners, as appropriate.

Section 3. Membership and Terms

- The Task Force shall consist of seven (7) Burke County residents, appointed by the Board of Commissioners.

- Appointees shall have a general knowledge of property tax principles, real estate, or community advocacy, and demonstrate a commitment to fair and equitable taxation.

- No more than one (1) member may be actively employed (or retired) in real estate, property appraisal, or tax administration to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

- One (1) seat will be designated for an active licensed general contractor who is familiar with market-based construction costs.

- One (1) seat will be designated for an active insurance, risk management, or banking professional who is familiar with market trends and asset replacement costs.

- One (1) seat will be designated for a representative of the agriculture community.

- Two (2) seats will be designated for at-large members.

- One (1) seat will be designated for a citizen over the age of 55.

- Each member shall serve a term of two (2) years, beginning from the date of appointment, unless otherwise removed or reappointed by the Board of Commissioners.

- Vacancies shall be filled by the Board of Commissioners for the remainder of the unexpired term.

- Members are expected to attend all Task Force meetings. In accordance with Sec. 2-92 of the county code of ordinances, members attending fewer than 50% of regularly scheduled meetings in a calendar year, without good and sufficient reason, or missing

three consecutive meetings, will result in forfeiture of membership.

- The Task Force will expire on January 1, 2027.

Section 4. Meetings and Open Government Compliance

- The Task Force is designated as a public body under North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 143, Article 33C (Open Meetings Law) and shall conduct all official meetings in compliance with said law.

- Proper notice shall be given for all meetings, and meetings shall be open to the public unless an exemption applies under law.

- Minutes shall be maintained for all meetings and made available for public inspection.

Section 5. Authority and Compliance

- The Task Force shall act in an advisory capacity only and shall not possess binding decision-making authority.

- All actions and recommendations of the Task Force shall be in accordance with applicable North Carolina General Statutes (the Machinery Act of NC), the North Carolina Administrative Code, and Burke County policies.

- The Task Force shall coordinate with the Burke County Manager, Tax Administrator, and County Attorney, as needed, to ensure proper legal and procedural guidance.

Section 6. Reporting

The Task Force shall provide periodic updates and a final report of findings and recommendations to the Burke County Board of Commissioners prior to the conclusion of the revaluation process.

Adopted this 21st day of July 2025.

/s/: Jeffrey C. Brittain
Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:
/s/: Kay Honeycutt Draughn
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board

CM - CONSIDERATION OF OFFER TO PURCHASE COUNTY-OWNED PROPERTY - KOWAL

Brian Epley, County Manager, gave a brief overview of the surplus property process as follows:

Surplus Real Property Transaction

Burke County, North Carolina

Competitive bid process....

- To sell real property through the upset bid process, a North Carolina county must follow the steps set forth in N.C.G.S. § 160A-269, as incorporated by N.C.G.S. § 153A-176.

Step 1: Receive an Offer
Step 2: Board Approval and Resolution
Step 3: Public Advertisement
Step 4: Receive and Review Upset Bids
Step 5: Repeat the Process (If Necessary)
Step 6: Final Approval and Sale

Important Notes:
•The county can reject any and all bids at any time before final acceptance.

•No sale is final until the Board votes to accept the highest offer.

•The property is sold "as-is", and the county is not required to warrant title unless agreed otherwise.



0 West View Trail, Icard NC 28601

- .45 Acre Tract
- Currently Tax Exempt (2014)
- Assessed Value…….$15,390
- County Cost…….$2,244.48
- Bidder……..Daniel Kowal
- Bid Amount…….$1,500
- Est. Tax Revenue…..$85 / Year



Commissioner Direction

Approve Resolution 2025-22

- Accepts the $1,500 bid
- Begins the upset bid process
- Authorizes staff to finalize transaction at conclusion of process

Deny Resolution 2025-22

- Denies the $1,500 bid and staff notifies the bidder of the opportunity to increase the bid

Additional information from the agenda packet:

On November 16, 2010, the Burke County Board of Commissioners adopted a policy regarding the sale of surplus real property, which was updated on September 15, 2020. The current version of the policy is included in the agenda packet for reference.

The property located at 0 West View Trail, Icard, NC (Parcel ID# 37261), totaling approximately 0.45 acres, is considered surplus. The County acquired the parcel through a tax foreclosure proceeding (File No. 13-CVD-1335), with a final purchase price of $2,244.48, in March 2014.

Daniel Kowal has submitted an offer to purchase the property for $1,500. While this amount is below the County's established minimum bid policy,

Section IV (Bid Exception) allows the Tax Assessor and County Attorney to recommend accepting a lower offer if deemed in the County's best interest.

The Tax Administrator supports accepting the $1,500 offer, citing the property's long-standing non-revenue-generating status and the benefit of returning it to the tax rolls to support future County revenues.

Budgetary Effect: Minimal impact on FY 24-25 budget.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Responding to Mr. Epley's advice that the bid was low, Commissioner Stroud was in agreement with that assessment. He emphasized that the county should not give away valuable assets—especially in areas with existing water and sewer access. Commissioner Burns asked whether the Board could set a minimum bid and suggested it should at least cover the $2,200 in back taxes owed, noting fairness to surrounding taxpayers who have consistently paid their taxes. Commissioner Barrier inquired whether the property could return to public auction if the bid were rejected, to which Mr. Epley confirmed it could, explaining that it remains open for offers and that staff are developing an online GIS map to improve transparency about available surplus properties.

County Attorney Hall added that the current offer would only start the upset bid process, requiring legal notice in the newspaper and allowing higher bids. He clarified that the county is not obligated to accept any final bid and recommended that any sale be completed via a non-warranty deed to limit future liability. Commissioner Burns reiterated his preference for the starting bid to cover the back taxes owed. There being no further discussion, Chairman Brittain opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To reject the offer to purchase real property, REID No. 37261, 0 West View Trail, in the amount of $1,500.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Brian Barrier, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CM - VEDIC FUNDING APPROVAL FOR FY 25-26

Brian Epley, County Manager, explained that during the adoption of the FY 2025-2026 Budget Ordinance, the Board approved recommended funding allocations for nonprofit organizations. However, action on funding for the Valdese Economic Development Investment Corporation (VEDIC) was deferred due to a lack of quorum resulting from Board member recusals and a commissioner's absence. Approval of the proposed funding allocation for VEDIC in the amount of $5,000 is requested. As members of VEDIC, Commissioners Barrier and Burns were asked to recuse themselves from the vote. County Attorney Hall recommended a vote be taken on the recusal of Commissioners Barrier and Burns.

Motion: To recuse Commissioners Barrier and Burns from the vote on funding for VEDIC.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [3 TO 0]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, and Mike Stroud
RECUSED:	Brian Barrier and Randy Burns

Motion: To execute funding for VEDIC for FY 26.

RESULT:	**ADOPTED [3 TO 0]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, and Mike Stroud
RECUSED:	Brian Barrier and Randy Burns

CM - APPROVAL OF OPIOID ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S BYLAWS

Katie Samuels, Opioid Settlement Coordinator, reported that the Opioid Advisory Committee approved its bylaws at their inaugural meeting in August. County Manager Epley clarified that, in accordance with County Code Section 2-87, approval of the bylaws is required by the County Commissioners.

Motion: To approve the bylaws for the Opioid Advisory Committee as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Brian Barrier, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Note: the bylaws as set forth in the agenda packet are hereby incorporated into the meeting minutes by reference.

HR - PRESENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF UPDATED HR POLICIES (PLACE HOLDER)

Brian Epley, County Manager, explained that this and the following associated item were not ready and requested that they be moved to next month's agenda for consideration.

Motion: To move the presentation and consideration of the updated HR policies, as well as the resolution supporting substantial equivalency, to the August agenda.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

HR - RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCY (PLACE HOLDER)

Note: This item was not ready and was moved to the August meeting, along with the Consideration of Updated HR Policies item. Both items were rescheduled with one (1) motion.

TAX DEPT. - TAX COLLECTION REPORT - JUNE 2025

John Bridgers, Tax Administrator, presented the Tax Collection Report for the period ending June 30, 2025, as follows:

Category	Amount Collected YTD	% Collected	Balance to Collect
Property Tax	$54,162,179.00	98.85%	$631,000.00
Motor Vehicle Tax	$5,972,339.52	117.65%	($896,095.52)
Current Year Taxes	$60,134,518.52	100.44%	($265,095.52)
Delinquent Taxes	$547,425.06	78.20%	$152,574.94
Penalty & Interest	$409,316.31	124.41%	($80,316.31)

The Tax Levy is the total property tax value, not including motor vehicles, times the tax rate. This amount changes monthly with the addition of discoveries, other changes, or corrections, and when Public Utility Values are added, typically during September.

Category	Tax Levy	Amount Collected YTD	% Collected	Balance to Collect
Property Tax	$55,158,636.64	$54,162,179.00	98.19%	$996,457.64

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To accept the Tax Collection Report for June 2025 as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Mike Stroud, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

TAX DEPT. - RELEASE REFUND REPORT - JUNE 2025

John Bridgers, Tax Administrator, presented the Tax Release and Refund Report for the period ending June 30, 2025, as follows:

Tax System Refunds and Releases			
Report Amount	Rebilled Amount	Net Release	Refund Amount
$3,733.63	$236.12	$3,497.51	$876.61

Bill #	Taxpayer Name	Bill Date	Operator ID (Name)	Release Date	Orig Bill Amount($)	Release Amount($)	Bill Amount after Release($)
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY	RELEASE REASON: Adjustment						
0024076007-2024-2024-0000-02-REG	STOVALL, JAMES	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	6/20/2025	280.12	44.00	236.12
0024076007-2024-2024-0000-02-REG	STOVALL, JAMES	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	6/20/2025	236.12	236.12	0.00
Subtotal					**516.24**	**280.12**	**236.12**
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY	RELEASE REASON: Duplicate Billing						
0024052852-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	COSTIC, AARON	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	6/16/2025	511.93	511.93	0.00
0024069643-2023-2023-0000-00-REG	PROPST, DONALD T	7/3/2023	KAYLA BURGESS	6/20/2025	6.16	6.16	0.00
Subtotal					**518.09**	**518.09**	**0.00**
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY	RELEASE REASON: Not in Burke County						
0024072658-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	BYTOF, CHRIS DAVID	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	6/19/2025	29.40	29.40	0.00
Subtotal					**29.40**	**29.40**	**0.00**
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY	RELEASE REASON: Over Assessment						
0024076007-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	STOVALL, JAMES	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	6/19/2025	452.19	452.19	0.00
0024076007-2024-2024-0000-01-REG	STOVALL, JAMES	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	6/19/2025	236.12	236.12	0.00
0024076007-2024-2024-0000-03-REG	STOVALL, JAMES	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	6/20/2025	452.19	452.19	0.00
0024076236-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	YORK, EDWARD GARLAND	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	6/13/2025	855.82	855.82	0.00
0024076236-2024-2024-0000-01-REG	YORK, EDWARD GARLAND	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	6/13/2025	585.58	585.58	0.00
Subtotal					**2,581.90**	**2,581.90**	**0.00**
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY	RELEASE REASON: Release LFUF						
0000018893-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NC	7/15/2024	AMANDA CONLEY	6/5/2025	88.00	88.00	0.00
Subtotal					**8.00**	**88.00**	
Total					**3,733.63**	**3,497.51**	**236.12**

VTS Refunds Over $100	
	Refund Amount
VTS Adjustments	$294.12

Payee Name	Address 3	Refund Type	Bill #	Transaction #	Refund Reason	Create Date	Tax Jurisdiction	Levy Type	Change	Interest Change	Total Change
MACE, SHELLEY DEANN	CONNELLY SPG, NC 28612	Adjustment >= $100	0085377796	456275204	Situs error	6/4/2025	01	TAX	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
							57	TAX	($164.85)	$0.00	($164.85)
							57	VEHICLE FEE	($20.00)	$0.00	($20.00)
							24	TAX	$36.27	$0.00	$36.27
										Refund	$148.58
STALNAKER, DANIEL LEE	CONNELLY SPG, NC 28612	Adjustment >= $100	0085662978	458599752	Situs error	6/25/2025	01	TAX	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
							57	TAX	($172.45)	$0.00	($172.45)
							57	VEHICLE FEE	($20.00)	$0.00	($20.00)
							36	TAX	$46.91	$0.00	$46.91
										Refund	$145.54
										Refund Total	$294.12

*Note: The net release amount results from the reported amount minus the rebilled amount.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, he called for a motion.

Motion: To approve the Tax Releases and Refunds for June 2025 as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

DSS - MONTHLY OPERATIONAL REPORT

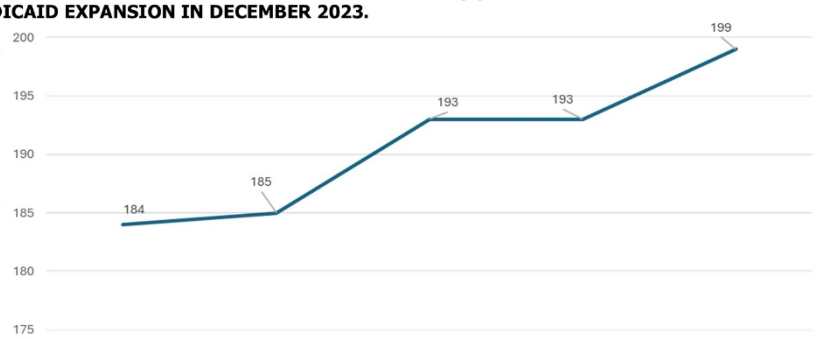
Korey Fisher-Wellman, DSS Director, presented the monthly DSS Operational Report as follows:





THE BURKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES HAS AN FTE ALLOCATION OF 199 POSITIONS. THIS HAS GROWN SUBSTANTIALLY OVER THE PAST FIVE (5) YEARS – SPECIFICALLY FOLLOWING A STAFFING ANALYSIS IN 2019. WE ADDITIONALLY ADDED SIX (6) FTES IN 2023 FOLLOWING THE APPROVAL OF MEDICAID EXPANSION IN DECEMBER 2023.





THE DEPARTMENT HAS FIFTEEN (15) PART-TIME STAFF, WHICH INCLUDES: ONE (1) INCOME MAINTENANCE CASEWORKER, ONE (1) FOSTER CARE SOCIAL WORKER, ONE (1) CPS SOCIAL WORKER, TWO (2) CPS CLERICAL STAFF, AND TEN (10) AFTER HOURS SUPPORT SPECIALISTS.

BURKECOUNTY

Hiring & Separation Report: May 2025

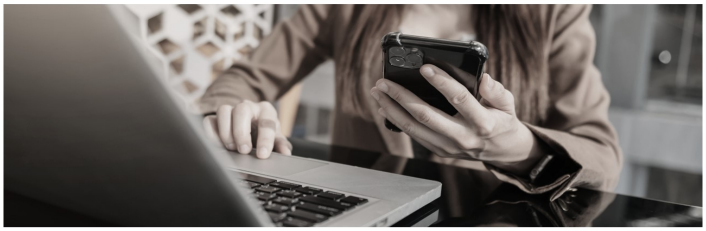
Current Openings:

Position Title	Position #:	Status
IMC III Leadworker	52045	
IMC III Leadworker	51901	
IMC III	52002	
IMC II	51895	
IMC II	51391	
IMC II	51381	
IMC II	51652	
IMC I	51413	
SOCIAL WORKER IA&T	51906	Final Offer
SOCIAL WORKER IA&T	51866	Conditional Offer
SOCIAL WORKER IA&T	51775	
SOCIAL WORKER IA&T	51434	
SOCIAL WORKER IA&T	51443	
Social Work Supervisor III	51788	
Training & QA Supervisor	52109	Conditional Offer
Social Work Supervisor III	51908	Conditional Offer

Separations:
Total = 3
Voluntary Resignation = 3
Number of Hirings:
Total = 6
Income Maintenance Supervisor II = 1
Income Maintenance Caseworker II = 3
Social Worker IA&T= 2

BURKECOUNTY

Operations



BURKECOUNTY

Economic Services MOU Data

METRICS PER MOU						
	FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES					
		MOU MEASURE	90%	95%		
ACTIVE RECIPIENTS	ACTIVE CASES	APP TIMELINESS RATE- REGULAR	APP TIMELINESS RATE-EXPEDITE	RECERT TIMELINESS RATE		
11,002	6,732	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		
WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES						
ACTIVE RECIPIENTS	ACTIVE CASES	MOU MEASURE	90%	95%		
			APPLICATION TIMELINESS	RECERT TIMELINESS RATE		
89	59		Achieved	Achieved		
MEDICAID		MOU MEASURE	90	90	95	
TOTAL MEDICAID RECIPIENTS	ACTIVE CASES		REPORT CARD MAD	REPORT CARD OTHER	Straight Through Processing	
28,736	22,789		Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE						
	MOU PERFORMANCE MEASURE			85%	88%	
SAA ACTIVE CASES				SAA TIMELINESS APPLICATIONS	SAD TIMELINESS APPLICATIONS	
246				Achieved	Achieved	
ENERGY PROGRAMS						
	MOU PERFORMANCE MEASURE				98%	98%
	CIP APPLICATIONS PROCESSED	LIEAP APPLICATIONS PROCESSED			% PROCESSED TIMELY - NO SOURCE 1 DAY	% PROCESSED TIMELY - WITH SOURCE 2 DAY
	89	0			Achieved	Achieved
CHILD CARE SUBSIDY						
		PERFORMANCE MEASURE		90%		
	ACTIVE CASES			APPLICATION TIMELINESS		
	468			Achieved		

Economic Services Update

MEDICAID

	AGED OR DISABLED ADULT ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS Does not include MXP or FP cases	ADULT ACTIVE CASES *Does not include MXP or FP cases	FAMILY AND CHILDREN ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS	FAMILY AND CHILDREN ACTIVE CASES	TOTAL MEDICAID APPLICATIONS TAKEN	TOTAL MEDICAID REVIEWS completed	TOTAL MEDICAID REVIEWS WITHOUT WAIVERS	CAP REFERRALS	LTC REFERRALS	TOTAL MEDICAID RECIPIENTS	TOTAL NEMT TRIPS	REPORT CARD MAD	REPORT CARD OTHER	RECERT COMPLETION TIMELINESS RATE	Straight Through Processing	Total
									MOU MEASURE	90	90	95				
MAY	5449	7,539	21624	13,790	502	520	2184	7	6	27,076	1048	97%	95%	[redacted]	100%	96%
JUN	5452	7,483	21723	13,831	404	425	1855	3	9	27,175	816	98%	97%		100%	97%
JUL	5440	7466	21,831	13,849	425	439	1977	3	19	27,271	773	100%	98%		100%	98%
AUG	5403	7505	21885	13,942	415	489	1540	4	11	27,288	773	93%	94%		100%	94%
SEP	5384	7609	21,937	13958	382	412	1890	3	17	27,323	626	96%	92%		100%	93%
OCT	5387	7563	22,277	14091	446	90	1128	4	14	27,666	642	96%	92%		100%	93%
NOV	5405	7584	22,655	14304	688	363	1746	9	10	28,062	573	97%	97%		100%	97%
DEC	5415	7567	22936	14554	582	1485	2246	10	11	28,351	582	100%	97%		100%	96%
JAN	5412	7612	23126	14845	565	2090	2900	5	9	28,538	651	96%	96%		100%	96%
FEB	5391	7,608	23436	14,952	352	2223	2580	1	7	28,561	683	93%	95%		100%	95%
MAR	5356	7,618	23247	15,012	411	855	2969	11	13	28603	735	100%	95%		100%	95%
APR	5389	7,752	23481	15,037	380	1571	*	4	12	28,870	683	96%	95%		100%	95%
MAY	5351	7,658	23365	15,147	382	*	*	3	9	28,716	713	93%	97%		100%	97%

Economic Services Update

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

	ACTIVE RECIPIENTS	ACTIVE CASES	APPLICATIONS TAKEN	APP TIMELINESS RATE-REGULAR	APP TIMELINESS RATE-EXPEDITE	RECERT TIMELINESS RATE	RECERTS COMPLETED	FNS EBT BENEFITS
			MOU MEASURE	95%	95%	95%		
MAY	11,292	5886	567	98.30%	96.88%	98.47%	523	1802439
JUN	11,216	5,853	573	98.96%	95.00%	98.86%	525	1795500
JUL	11,138	5,799	556	96.38%	93.75%	98.73%	555	1772168
AUG	11,155	5792	579	99.53%	95.20%	99.26%	539	1791212
SEP	11,199	5814	525	99.51%	98.26%	98.28%	406	*
OCT	11,503	5975	731/6302	98.54%	94.23%	72.63%	285	3230130
NOV	11,981	6206	394	100.00%	97.81	67%	739	2962954
DEC	12,193	6312	346	97.62%	98.15%	100%	356	2016823
JAN	12,108	6275	585	99.31%	99.77%	100%	525	1,973,378
FEB	11,951	6236	449	97.18%	100%	98.75%	561	1,963,605
MAR	11,907	6183	499	97.21%	100%	98.48%	526	1,965,566
APR	11,396	5959	591	97.24%	100.00%	97.77%	720	1,871,687
MAY	11,002	5732	576	98.11%	99.15%	99.13%	692	1,808,941

CPS Case Load

SOCIAL WORKER NAME	CASELOAD JAN 2025	CASELOAD FEB 2025	CASELOAD MARCH 2025	CASELOAD APRIL 2025	CASELOAD MAY 2025	CASELOAD JUNE 2025
TB	31	33	22			
TD	22	28	33	40	35	28
LE	21	28	25	29	22	22
KG	7	7	7	5	6	3
KH	7	6	2	15	20	20
BH	18	19	16	13	3	3
LM	16	14	9			
AO	20	29	22			
SR	24	34	35	40	33	17
LR	23					
AT	23	34	38	26	19	18
KW	23	16	9	8	4	
MG	3	4	8	18	17	16
HH			9	10	18	22
JE				10	14	17
CC					4	4
AW					3	5
HD						2
LB			17	20	20	28
AVERAGE	18.3076923	21	18	19.5	15.57142857	14.64285714

Month/2025	TOTAL # of Cases	TOTAL #OLD BACKLOG (195 ON 1/1/25)
January	290	142
February	322	121
March	314	97
April	294	66
May	288	51
June	264	32
AVERAGE	295.3333333	

BURKECOUNTY

Foster Care Update



Currently, there are 184 children experiencing foster care in Burke County.

- 13 children entered care
- 15 children exited care
  - 2 cases were conflicts, 5 through adoption, 5 through Guardianship, and 3 reunifications

BURKECOUNTY

Adult Services Update

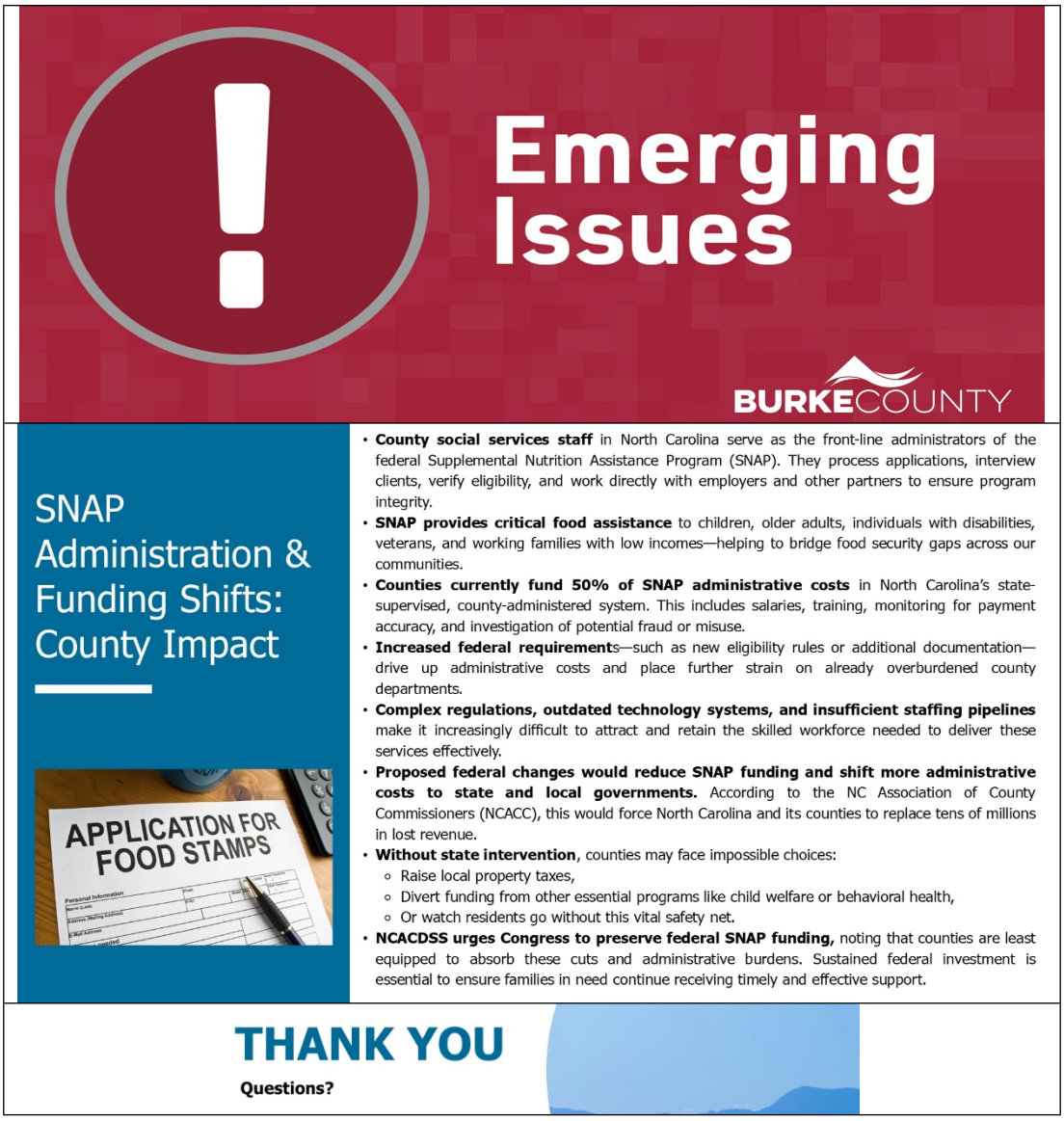


- **Guardianship - 61 wards**
  Contracted Wards -17
- **SAIH *(Special Assistance In-Home)* - 51**
  State caseload is 25-30, and there is only one SAIH SW
- ***CAP (Community Alternatives Program)***
  142 currently with the ability to hold up to 188 or more.

May APS Data

Category	Number	Notes
Total APS Reports Received	33	
APS Reportrs Screened In	20	Reports meeting criteria for investigation
Sustanciated Cases	5	
Confirmed Cases	10	Includes substantiations and other confirmations
Cases Opened for Services	7	Ongoing support and case management
Outreach Cases Assigned	6	Proactive engagement with at-risk adults
Service Referrals	18	Referrals for supportive community services
Guardianship Referrals	4	Referrals for potential legal guardianship

BURKECOUNTY



Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Mr. Fisher-Wellman responded to a clarifying question from Commissioner Burns. He then responded to Commissioner Stroud's inquiry about staff sentiment on the building renovation plans. There being no further discussion, Chairman Brittain called for a motion.

Motion: To accept the report as presented.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

BOC - REPORTS & COMMENTS

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for reports and comments from Board members and professional staff. Commissioner Stroud expressed excitement about the upcoming 250th birthday of America. Vice Chairman Smith requested, with the blessing of the other Board members, for the County Manager to explore the development of a firing/shooting range in

Burke County for use by law enforcement and the general public. Chairman Brittain shared information on the upcoming BOC meeting and the NCACC conference. Commissioner Burns wished the Chairman a happy birthday.

RESULT:	**NO ACTION TAKEN.**

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLERK - BOARDS AND COMMITTEES VACANCY REPORT

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, announced the following vacancies on county boards or committees as follows:

- Adult Care & Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee
- Burke County Public Health Advisory Board
- Hickory Regional Planning Commission
- Drexel Planning Board - ETJ Alternate
- Burke County Planning Board
- Partners Health Management's Human Rights Committee
- Burke Development Inc. (BDI)
- Animal Advisory Board
- Burke Senior Center Advisory Board

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments and then encouraged citizens to participate and get involved.

RESULT:	**NO ACTION TAKEN.**

CLOSED SESSION

RESULT:	**NOT NEEDED, NOT HELD.**

ADJOURN

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Approved this 17th day of November 2025.

_____

Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:

_____
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board