June 3, 2026

BURKE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

The Burke County Public Health Advisory Committee met in its regular session on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held in the Board Room located at 700 East Parker Road, Morganton, North Carolina. The Members present were:

PRESENT: Jessi Stout, Vice Chairman
Dr. Laura Gratton
Dr. Joel Welch
Dr. Kenneth Bonfield
Dr. Nicholas Thomas
Commissioner Phil Smith
Josett Taylor
Gwen Stephens

ABSENT: Dr. Anthony Frank
Cristy Gupton

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Ashley Jarrett, Interim Public Health Director
Bobby Smith, Director of Nursing
Amy Burnette, Administrative Assistant
Miranda Sith, Public Health Educator/PIO

CALL TO ORDER: Vice Chairman Stout called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m.

MISSION, VISION, VALUES

Burke County Public Health's Mission, Vision, and Values declaration was read aloud by Vice Chairman Stout .

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chairman Stout called for a motion to approve the Minutes from the April 1st Advisory Board Meeting. Commissioner Smith made the motion, Dr. Bonfield seconded and it stands approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice Chairman Stout called for a motion to approve the Agenda for this meeting. Dr. Welch made the motion with a second from Dr. Bonfield and it stands approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

FORMAL INTRODUCTION:

Dr. Ashley Jarrett formally introduced herself to the Advisory Committee noting that she has worked for Burke County Public Health for the last six years. She began her career here in the Health Department as a Communicable Disease Nurse. In 2023, she was promoted to Assistant Health Director and is now serving as the Interim Health Director until further notice.

PRESENTATIONS:

There were no presentations at this meeting

In alignment with the Burke County Public Health Strategic Plan, the following reports were made:

1. **Establish a Culture of Dignity, Love, and Respect (Dr. Ashley Jarrett)**
    - Dr. Jarrett gave a Financial Report for the Health Department. She noted that we are still in the "budget season", but a proposed budget has been released. A copy was given to each committee member. The health department's budget will be finalized by the commissioners at their next meeting later this month. This year's budget is going to be very tight-especially with medication costs, etc.
    - HRC BUILDING-the last thing we were told by the architect is that they MAY begin building in December. That is going to be a tough period for the department. We will have makeshift clinic rooms, mostly where BCPS is situated now. Some staff will work remotely. Some will have a landing spot here and maybe at FHEC. But, the plan is to still see as many patients and be good providers to our patients during the construction phase.
2. **Be an Employer of Choice (Dr. Ashley Jarrett)**
    - WIC: WIC is excelling in performance. They are serving more than the 97% of the clients by the state.
    - PREPAREDNESS: Todd Staton received the NC Public Health Preparedness and Response Team (PHP&R) Community Engagement Award for establishing critical cross-sector partnerships that ensure systems, partners, and staff are better prepared for future emergencies.
3. **Be an Academic Health Department (Dr. Ashley Jarrett)**
    - BCPH is continuing the mental health collaborative with UNC Gillings. There are two of these meetings left this year. The next one will be held on July 24th at 12:30 at the Morganton Community House. This meeting will focus on Perinatal & Maternal Mental Health. The final meeting will be held at the same venue/time on August 21st. This meeting will focus on Financial Systems Mapping for Mental Health and Final Wrap-up Data Sharing. Dr. Jarrett invited any member of the Board to attend. The overall goal of these meetings is to gather data and use that data for the improvement of mental health in Burke County.
4. **Be a Healthcare Treatment Provider of Choice (Bobby Smith)**
    - Mr. Smith gave a clinic update. Our numbers have remained in-line with previous months and years with seeing 237 patients with 411 visits in April and 194 patients with 305 visits in May.
    - Our new PA-C started working with us last month. Claudia Ramirez has taken Kathy Zook's since Kathy's retirement. Bobby noted that Claudia is uncomfortable/unfamiliar with working with children, so we may need to move the child health clinic to Tuesdays when Dr. Hamm is here in the clinic until Claudia is up-to-speed with child health visits. She will be taking some extra classes to help, as well.

5. **Be a Good Leader in Environmental Health (Dr. Ashley Jarrett)**
    - Environmental Health's On-Site Wastewater Program is now at four weeks from application to permit-still one of the fastest turnaround times in the state.
    - Currently, Food & Lodging are at 98% of completion of required inspections. We are confident that by June 30th, the department will get a 100% completion for the first time since 2009.
    - Registered Interns, Lakin Riddle and Elizabeth Nesbitt, have passed the essay portion of their state testing and will sit for their interviews next month.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

Dr. Jarrett asked the committee about the Advisory Committee's structure and flow. She asked if Is an opportunity to "flow" better. Does any member want to change the way our meetings are held? No member had any quarrels or thought any changes needed to be made. Gwen asked about having a Policy Review Task Force. Further conversation regarding this will be had at future meetings.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS:

Commissioner Smith reminded everyone that the Burke County Board of Commissioners will be meeting as the Burke County Board of Health on Monday, July 27, 2026 at 3:00p in the Commissioners Chambers located at 110 N Green Street Morganton. He invited all members of this Advisory Committee to attend.

ADJOURNMENT:

Vice Chairman Stout made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Thomas seconded the motion. The Burke County Public Health Advisory Committee Meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next Burke County Advisory Meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 5, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

Approval and Attestation on following page

Approved on August 5, 2026

_____
Dr. Anthony Frank, Chairman
Burke County Advisory Committee

ATTEST:

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Dr. Ashley Jarrett, DNP, CPH
Burke County Public Health Interim Director