MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'

BRIEFING MEETING OF JULY 21, 2026.

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met to hold a Briefing Meeting on April 1, 2025, in the Commission Chamber at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Terri Wells, Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Parker Sloan; Commissioner Jennifer Horton; Commissioner Drew Ball.

Absent: Chair Amanda Edwards and Vice-Chair Martin Moore.

Commissioner Whitesides opened the meeting and noted that Chair Edwards and Vice-Chair Moore could not be in attendance. Commissioner Wells made a motion for Commissioner Whitesides to Chair the Briefing and Regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ball and carried unanimously.

1. CDBG-DR Update: Community Infrastructure

Tyler Henry provided background information. He provided an overview of the Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Community Infrastructure program, including funding availability, project eligibility requirements, application timelines, and public participation requirements. Henry provided detailed information on the three potential Buncombe County grant applications: Parks Recovery and Resilience, Ferry Road Infrastructure to support affordable housing, and Community Resilience improvements at County-owned facilities, each intended to address unmet needs resulting from Tropical Storm Helene. He further reviewed the proposed project development schedule, noting that grant applications are due September 8, 2026, with a public hearing anticipated on August 18 and Board consideration of application authorization on September 1.

2. Continuum of Care Update

Lacy Hoyle provided the Board with an update on Continuum of Care (CoC) activities, including the FY26 Code Purple program, which operated for 80 nights, served an average of 48 individuals per night, and utilized emergency funding to expand daytime shelter capacity during Winter Storm Gianna. The presentation also outlined FY27 Code Purple planning, upcoming HUD and Emergency Solutions Grant funding opportunities, the Right at Home Homelessness Prevention Partnership, and a CDBG-DR planning grant to support emergency shelter planning. She informed the Board that the Salvation Army's Center of Hope Shelter is expected to pause operations beginning November 1, 2026, temporarily removing 65 shelter beds while partners work to identify operational funding and collaborative solutions.

3. Cyclosporiasis Cases in NC Update

Dr. Ellis Matheson provided the Board with an update on Cyclospora, a seasonal parasitic illness transmitted through contaminated food or water. She noted that North Carolina is among several states experiencing an increase in cases. She reviewed common symptoms,

current case counts, and reported that Buncombe County has identified four cases with no hospitalizations or deaths. She further outlined the Health Department's response, including enhanced surveillance, case investigations, coordination with state and federal partners, communication with healthcare providers, and public education efforts. Dr. Matheson also provided guidance on preventive measures, including proper produce washing, hand hygiene, staying home when ill, and seeking medical care for persistent symptoms.

MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'

REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 21, 2026.

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met to hold a Regular Meeting on July 21, 2026, in the Commission Chamber at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Terri Wells, Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Parker Sloan; Commissioner Jennifer Horton; Commissioner Drew Ball.

Absent: Chair Amanda Edwards and Vice-Chair Martin Moore.

Commissioner Whitesides opened the meeting and provided opening remarks.

CONSENT

1. Approval of the June 16, 2026, Combined Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of the May 2026 Tax Collection Report
3. Approval of the Board Delegate Representative at the NC Association of County Commissioners Conference
4. Resolution Approving Pyrotechnic Experts for Firework Displays
5. Approval of Design Services Contract for EMS West Regional Base
6. Approval of Design Services Contract for 205 College Exterior Envelope Repairs
7. Approval of Construction Contract for the Asheville Middle School Track Replacement and Softball Field Restroom Addition
8. Approval of Construction Contract for the A-B Tech Allied Health Building Cooling Tower Replacement
9. Approval of Updated FY27 Budget Resolution for Opioid Settlement Funds

Commissioner Wells made a motion to amend consent item 3 to add Commissioner Wells and Commissioner Horton as voting delegates for the District 16 Caucus, in addition to the NCACC conference. Commissioner Sloan seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Horton asked for clarification regarding the amounts stated in consent item 9 regarding Opioid settlement funds. Staff clarified that there was an error in the proposed resolution and the correct number is $3.6 million. Staff confirmed that the resolution would be corrected.

Commissioner Horton made a motion to accept the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sloand and carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ann Babcock – Vice Chair on the Parks and Recreation Board, expressed her support the Parks and Recreation Proclamation on the agenda.

PRESENTATIONS

1. **Parks & Recreation Month Proclamation**

Commissioner Wells read the Proclamation. The proclamation highlighting the vital role parks and recreation play in promoting health, wellness, environmental stewardship, and community connection. The proclamation also recognized the continued efforts of Parks & Recreation staff and partners to restore parks impacted by Tropical Storm Helene and encouraged residents to celebrate by enjoying local parks, trails, and recreational opportunities.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **Public Hearing and Adoption of the Buncombe County Air Quality Code**

Ashley Fetherstone provided background information. She explained that on June 16, the Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution to create a local air quality program under the governance of Buncombe County. This program will become a Division of Permits and Inspections and is taking over the duties of the Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency. As directed in the June 16 Resolution, a 30-day public notice with an opportunity to request a public hearing for the adoption of the proposed Buncombe County Air Quality Code was issued on June 17 and the Public Hearing is scheduled to be held at this July 21 meeting. She further explained that this is a request for board action to adopt the air quality code with the only changes being updates to Chapter 1 to reflect the new governing structure.

Commissioner Whitesides opened the public hearing at 5:21 p.m. There were no commenters and the public hearing closed at 5:21 p.m.

Commissioner Wells made the motion to adopt the Buncombe County Air Quality Code to be effective on July 24, 2026. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ball and carried unanimously.

2. **CDBG-DR Commercial District Revitalization - Public Hearing #2**

Tyler Henry provided background information. He explained that in response to the State of North Carolina's "Commercial District Revitalization" Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grant opportunity, staff have prepared two proposed applications for funding. The "Swannanoa Commercial Corridor Revitalization" project proposes to improve pedestrian access in the Highway 70 Commercial Corridor, supporting Swannanoa's economic revitalization post-Helene. The "Commercial Corridor Remediation and Revitalization" project proposes to remediate storm-damaged property located in all commercial areas of unincorporated Buncombe County that experienced physical damage as a result of Hurricane Helene. This grant application requires two public hearings and public comment period. The first public hearing and public comment period were conducted in May/June of 2026.

Commissioner Whitesides opened the public hearing at 5:33 p.m. There were 3 commenters:

Carol Groben – Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa Board Member - thanked the Commissioners and Staff for being great partners to the community. These two funding grants are looking at do address two critical needs in the community.

Megan Mccreary – Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa Board Member – expressed full support for both projects presented and emphasized the importance and need for sidewalks in the community.

Matt Barker – Friends of Neighbors of Swannanoa Board Chair – expressed support and emphasized the importance of these proposed projects for the business community.

Commissioner Whitesides closed the public hearing at 5:45 p.m.

Commissioner Horton made the motion to approve the resolution and authorize staff to submit proposed applications for the Commercial District Revitalization CDBG-DR Helene Recovery grant program. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wells and approved unanimously.

3. **ZPH2026-00016 Street Name, Street Address and Address Display Ordinance Text Amendment**

Gillian Phillips, Principal Planner, provided background information. She explained that ZPH2026-00016 Street Name, Street Address and Address Display Ordinance Text Amendment: Buncombe County is proposing changes to Article II in Chapter 66 of the Buncombe County Code of Ordinances to clarify and modernize the ordinance and align it with current policy. This includes removing outdated references and definitions, adding new definitions, and aligning roadway naming procedures with current policy and practice.

Commissioner Wells clarified that the key reason for this text amendment is to reduce response times for public safety and also asked about the fairness analysis document in the materials. Phillips confirmed this was to reduce response times and clarified that the Fairness Analysis is included in every text amendment. She further explained that this is an analysis of how the proposed text amendment could affect vulnerable communities. She noted that this text amendment was a win-win.

Commissioner Whitesides opened the public hearing at 5:59 p.m. there were no commenters and the public hearing closed at 5:59 p.m.

Commissioner Sloan made the motion to approve the proposed text amendment as it is consistent with the Buncombe County 2043 Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Budget Amendment to Accept Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP) Grant**

Jennier Harrison provided background information. She explained that the Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP) is administered by the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation and overseen by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC). She said it was established under General Statute §139-65, and the program aims to repair and maintain waterways and drainage structures, reduce flood risks, improve stream health, and enhance natural habitats for recreation such as fishing, boating, and other recreation. The program covers 100% of project costs with no out-of-pocket costs to landowners of approved projects. Buncombe County has been awarded $802,275 to stabilize approximately 3,500 feet of streambank damaged by Tropical Storm Helene. She said that the period of performance for the grant award is through June 30, 2029.

Commissioner Wells thanked staff for these continued efforts and made the motion to approve the budget amendment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sloan and carried unanimously.

2. **Budget Amendment for School Capital Funding Commission FY27 Requests**

Matt Evans provided background information. He explained that at the April 27, 2026, and May 28, 2026, School Capital Fund Commission meetings, the Commission approved for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners $42,183,186 for Fiscal Year 2027. Due to critical timing of certain projects, $30,146,500 was approved by the Board of Commissioners as part of the FY2027 budget adoption. The additional $12,036,686 is recommended for Board of Commissioner consideration at the July 21, 2026 Board of Commissioners Meeting. This includes $11,995,000 related to Buncombe County Schools and $1,691,686 related to Asheville City Schools.

He further explained that as part of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget process, the Board of Commissioners approved $1,650,000 for security updates for Asheville City Schools. The School Capital Fund Commission is recommending repurposing the $1,650,000 to offset Fiscal Year 2027 Asheville City Schools requests. The remaining project funding comes from previously unallocated Article 39 sales tax.

Commissioner Wells made the motion to approve the budget amendment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sloan and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Sloan asked about the health of the fund balance. Commissioner Wells noted that she is on the Board and that they are watching closely and doing both PAYGO and debt service. Evans explained the modeling process for the fund balance and noted that the fund is currently healthy.

3. **Budget Amendment to Accept Emergency Services DHHS Rural Health Transformation Program Grant**

John Hudson, Budget Director, provided background information. He explained that the Emergency Services Department has been awarded the NC DHHS Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Mobile Integrated Health Grant. This grant will allow the Community

Paramedicine program to hire two additional team members: 1) Mental Health Clinician, and 2) Peer Support Specialist to assist with community-based behavioral health services throughout Buncombe County, including rural and underserved communities where access to behavioral health treatment is limited.

Commissioner Horton made the motion to approve the budget amendment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wells and carried unanimously.

4. Budget Amendment for BCS Lottery Projects

John Hudson, Budget Director, provided background information. He explained that On May 19th, the Board of Commissioners approved five lottery applications for Buncombe County Schools. The Department of Public Instruction has approved those applications, and this budget amendment establish those projects, funded via lottery proceeds, in the amount of $2.5 million. Each project in this group is the campus repaving.

Commissioner Sloan made the motion to approve the budget amendment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wells and carried unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

1. Board Appointments for July 21, 2026

• Affordable Housing Subcommittee – Commissioner Sloan motioned to reappoint Meaghan Austin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ball and carried unanimously.

• General Obligation Bonds Oversight Committee – Commissioner Wells motioned to appoint Scott Dickens. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sloan and carried unanimously.

• Early Childhood Education & Development Coalition – Commissioner Sloan was recused from voting due to relationship with one of the applicants. Commissioner Horton motioned to appoint Maia Sloan, Karen Lauffer, Mara Davis, and Stephanie Jones. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ball and carried unanimously.

• Economic Development Coalition – Commissioner Horton motioned to appoint Ben Colvin. Commissioner Sloan seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

• Tourism Development Authority – Commissioner Ball motion to appoint Dexter Hazel. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wells and carried unanimously.

• Library Advisory Board – Commissioner Horton motion to appoint Artie Miller. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wells and carried unanimously.

• Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee – Commissioner Ball motioned to appoint Mike Sule. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Horton and carried unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.