



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

9:00 AM Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center, 1192 US
Hwy 64 West, Pittsboro, NC 27312

SPECIAL MEETING- LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

Present: 5 - Chair Amanda Robertson, Vice Chair Franklin Gomez Flores, Commissioner David Delaney, Commissioner Karen Howard and Commissioner Katie Kenlan

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOMING REMARKS FROM CHAIR ROBERTSON

Chair Amanda Robertson welcomed attendees representing Chatham County, its municipalities, educational institutions, community organizations, and state legislators. Robertson expressed appreciation for the opportunity to bring local and state partners together to discuss legislative priorities and issues affecting the county and its residents. Robertson noted the strong attendance from local governments, schools, Central Carolina Community College, and community organizations before calling the meeting to order.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

[26-0132](#)

Receive a presentation on the Chatham County Legislative Priorities

Attachments: [Chatham County Legislative Priorities Overview 3-18-2026](#)
[Chatham County Legislative Priorities Packet 3-18-2026](#)
[STHL Legislative Goals](#)

County Manager Bryan Thompson presented Chatham County's legislative priorities and emphasized the importance of maintaining strong partnerships among local governments, educational institutions, community organizations, and the county's legislative delegation. Thompson explained that the priorities presented represented only the highest-priority items, while a more detailed packet containing additional requests and supporting information would be provided to legislators.

Thompson began by discussing the County's concerns regarding state downzoning restrictions. Thompson explained that Chatham County's land-use planning efforts, including Plan Chatham and the Unified Development Ordinance, were developed through extensive public outreach and community engagement. Thompson stated that current state downzoning laws have limited the County's ability to implement these locally developed plans and have created legal and administrative challenges. The County requested that the General Assembly amend or repeal the downzoning legislation and restore local authority over land-use decisions so that the County can balance growth while preserving its rural character and agricultural heritage.

Thompson next addressed the County's concern regarding proposed property tax

reforms. Thompson explained that local governments have limited tools available to generate revenue and that property taxes remain one of the primary mechanisms for funding essential services. Thompson stated that any restrictions on local property tax authority could negatively affect the County's ability to provide mandated services and meet growing demands. The County requested that legislators protect local authority over property tax systems, preserve county fiscal stability, and close tax loopholes that create inequities in property taxation.

Department of Social Services Director Jennie Kristiansen then discussed the impact of federal changes affecting SNAP and Medicaid programs. Kristiansen explained that new work requirements and revised eligibility verification procedures will significantly increase administrative responsibilities for county staff. Kristiansen stated that approximately 2,600 Chatham County residents could be affected by the new requirements and that the County will need additional technological support to process eligibility determinations efficiently. Kristiansen also noted that federal changes will reduce SNAP administrative funding by approximately 25 percent, resulting in an estimated annual cost increase of \$350,000 for Chatham County. Kristiansen requested state assistance for technology modernization and additional funding support.

Returning to the podium, Thompson highlighted affordable housing as another major legislative priority. Thompson noted that housing affordability continues to be a growing concern and stated that the median home sale price in Chatham County was approximately \$880,000. The County requested creation of a state housing tax credit that aligns with the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, as well as dedicated funding sources to help local governments develop innovative affordable and workforce housing solutions.

Thompson concluded by discussing the County's broader goal of protecting local authority. Thompson stated that local governments are best positioned to make decisions related to land use, environmental protection, public safety, infrastructure planning, and budgeting. The County requested that legislators oppose measures that preempt local decision-making authority and instead preserve local control to promote smart growth, economic resilience, and a high quality of life for residents.

Before concluding the presentation, Thompson expressed appreciation for the collaborative relationships among county departments, municipalities, schools, community colleges, law enforcement agencies, and state legislators. Thompson noted that ongoing communication and cooperation have helped address many local challenges and strengthen community partnerships.

[26-0133](#)

Receive a presentation on the Town of Pittsboro Legislative Priorities

Attachments: [Town of Pittsboro 2026 Legislative Priorities 3-18-2026](#)

Mayor Kyle Shipp presented the Town of Pittsboro's legislative priorities.

Shipp first discussed the Town's request for a public safety revolving loan fund. Shipp explained that rapidly growing communities face significant costs associated with constructing and equipping police, fire, and emergency services facilities. Shipp stated that a revolving loan fund, modeled after existing water and wastewater loan programs, would help municipalities meet public safety infrastructure needs without placing undue financial burdens on taxpayers.

Shipp also expressed concerns regarding the impacts of downzoning legislation and requested clarification or repeal of the legislation to restore local planning authority. Shipp noted that municipalities need flexibility to address growth, preserve neighborhood character, and make appropriate land-use decisions.

Shipp further outlined the Town's request for state support to address legacy stormwater infrastructure. Shipp explained that older portions of Pittsboro were not designed to accommodate modern stormwater demands and are increasingly vulnerable to flooding during severe weather events. The Town requested creation of a state stormwater infrastructure funding program that would provide grants and low-interest loans for flood mitigation, drainage improvements, and aging infrastructure replacement.

Finally, Shipp emphasized the importance of preserving local property tax authority. Shipp noted that property taxes fund nearly all police and fire services and a significant portion of parks and recreation programs. Shipp expressed concern that proposed property tax reforms could threaten municipalities' ability to maintain essential services and responsibly plan for growth.

[26-0144](#)

Receive a presentation on the Town of Siler City Legislative Priorities

Attachments: [Town of Siler City Legislative Priorities 3-18-2026](#)

Mayor Donald Matthews presented the Town of Siler City's legislative priorities.

Matthews focused heavily on downtown revitalization, describing downtown Siler City as the community's economic and cultural heartbeat. Matthews stated that investments in infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, lighting, and public spaces, are essential to revitalizing the downtown area and attracting future economic development.

Matthews also emphasized the importance of ongoing support for regional water infrastructure projects. Matthews discussed the benefits of the TriRiver Water initiative and noted that while the transition was initially unpopular with some residents, the regional approach has positioned the community for long-term growth and improved service delivery.

Matthews highlighted public safety, utilities, and economic development needs, including the community's evaluation of future data center development opportunities. Matthews stated that local leaders are carefully examining the potential benefits and challenges associated with such projects, particularly in relation to energy consumption, water usage, and infrastructure capacity.

Recreation facilities were identified as another major priority. Matthews explained that Siler City recently lost a recreation facility and faces costs estimated between \$10 million and \$15 million to replace it. Matthews requested additional funding assistance for parks and recreation projects.

In closing, Matthews advocated for greater local flexibility and fewer state-imposed restrictions, stating that local governments are best positioned to determine the needs of their communities and make decisions that reflect local priorities.

[26-0134](#)

Receive a presentation on the Chatham County Board of Education Legislative Priorities

Attachments: [Chatham County Board of Education 2026 Legislative Priorities 3-18-2026](#)

Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson presented the legislative priorities of Chatham County Schools.

Jackson stated that strong public schools strengthen North Carolina's workforce, economy, and communities. Jackson emphasized the need for a stable, predictable, and accountable school funding system and expressed concern regarding the absence of a finalized state budget. Jackson explained that school districts cannot effectively recruit staff, plan programs, or establish operating budgets without certainty regarding state funding levels.

Jackson stressed the need to recruit and retain high-quality teachers by increasing teacher salaries, restoring master's degree pay, improving compensation for classified employees, and strengthening principal compensation. Jackson noted that beginning teacher salaries remain relatively low and that many education professionals struggle to afford housing and living expenses within Chatham County.

Jackson also highlighted school safety and student well-being. Jackson advocated for recurring state funding for School Resource Officers rather than relying on annual grant programs. Additionally, Jackson requested expanded access to school-based mental health services and fewer restrictions related to telehealth services for students and families.

Jackson spoke about the need to modernize North Carolina's school accountability system. Jackson noted that current accountability measures rely heavily on standardized test performance and do not adequately recognize student growth and other indicators of school quality.

Jackson concluded by discussing school facility funding needs. As a growing county, Chatham continues to require investments in new school construction and facility improvements. Jackson requested revisions to state funding processes that currently limit access to school construction assistance for counties classified as Tier 3 counties.

[26-0135](#)

Receive a presentation on the Central Carolina Community College Legislative Priorities

Attachments: [CCCC 2026 Legislative Priorities 3-18-2026](#)

Dr. Lisa Chapman, President of Central Carolina Community College, presented the institution's legislative priorities.

Chapman emphasized the critical role that North Carolina's community colleges play in workforce development. Chapman noted that the state's community college system continues to receive national recognition for workforce preparation and economic development. Chapman requested improved compensation for community college employees and modernization of the funding model used to support community colleges across the state.

Chapman also requested legislation allowing Central Carolina Community College's health science centers in Chatham and Harnett counties to qualify for multi-campus funding.

Chapman highlighted the College's Moore Center project and thanked Chatham County for its leadership in securing regional support. Chapman explained that the project originally carried a \$50 million estimated cost but now exceeds \$100 million due to inflation and construction cost increases. Chapman reported that the project recently received a \$2.5 million Golden LEAF grant and that additional state support will be needed to complete the project.

REMARKS FROM STATE LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

Representative Robert Reives thanked local officials and community partners for participating in the Legislative Breakfast and praised the event as an effective forum for communication between state and local leaders.

Reives provided an update regarding the status of the state budget and discussed ongoing disagreements within the General Assembly regarding revenue policy and tax reform. Reives expressed concerns about proposals that could limit local governments' ability to raise revenue through property taxes and emphasized the importance of maintaining local authority over financial decisions.

Reives noted that local governments are increasingly being asked to provide services without receiving sufficient support from state or federal resources. Reives also discussed broader concerns related to housing affordability, workforce development, public education, and public safety. Reives stressed that effective government requires collaboration and a willingness to address local challenges through practical solutions rather than political disagreements.

Reives concluded by reaffirming his commitment to advocating for Chatham County's priorities and encouraged local leaders to continue working together and communicating regularly with legislators.

Peace Ajirotutu, Legislative Assistant to Senator Natalie Murdock, provided remarks on the Senator's behalf.

Ajirotutu explained that Senator Murdock was in Washington, D.C., advocating for federal funding opportunities benefiting Chatham County and surrounding communities. Ajirotutu conveyed Senator Murdock's appreciation for the collaborative efforts among county and municipal leaders.

Ajirotutu highlighted several recent grant awards benefiting Chatham County, including funding for disaster recovery, energy efficiency, parks and recreation projects, trail development, transit services, emergency management capacity building, emergency services infrastructure, and broadband expansion. In total, Ajirotutu reported that approximately \$18.2 million in grant funding had recently been secured for projects serving Chatham County residents.

Ajirotutu stated that Senator Murdock remains committed to supporting local priorities, including education, health and human services, infrastructure, and economic development. Ajirotutu encouraged local officials to continue sharing concerns and legislative requests throughout the upcoming legislative session.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Amanda Robertson thanked all presenters, elected officials, community partners, and attendees for participating in the Legislative Breakfast and for their

continued commitment to serving Chatham County residents.

Robertson called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Commissioner David Delaney, seconded by Vice Chair Franklin Gomez Flores, that the meeting was adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Chair Robertson, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Commissioner Delaney, Commissioner Howard, and Commissioner Kenlan