



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Monday, May 5, 2025

6:00 PM

Historic Courthouse Courtroom

Regular Session - 6:00 PM - Historic Courthouse Courtroom

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Howard called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

INVOCATION and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Howard asked for a moment of silence which was followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADJUSTMENTS AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

Chair Howard called for any adjustments to the agenda.

Howard requested the addition of 25-0228 - Vote to approve a Resolution Concerning NC Bills Introduced for Planning and Zoning be placed under the consent agenda.

Commissioner Delaney requested the addition of the appointment of Terri Tyson as the District 3 appointment to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to the consent agenda.

Commissioner Robertson stated for the record, she would like for the request to the agenda to be emailed to the board so that the members can review the applications before the meeting.

Chair Howard called for a vote on the request to add the appointment of Terri Tyson as the District 3 appointment to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to the consent agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner David Delaney that the appointment of Terri Tyson as the District 3 appointment to the Recreation Advisory Committee be added to the consent agenda. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 1 - Commissioner Delaney

No: 4 - Chair Howard, Vice Chair Kenlan, Commissioner Gomez Flores, and Commissioner Robertson

ADJUSTMENTS AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR SESSION AGENDA

After the motion failed, Commissioner Delaney requested the addition of the appointment of Terri Tyson as the District 3 appointment to the Recreation Advisory Committee to the regular agenda.

Chair Howard called for approval of the agenda with the additional items added.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Katie Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, that the agenda was approved as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Vice Chair Katie Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, that the consent agenda was approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[25-0196](#)

Vote to approve the March 17, 2025 Work and Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [3-17-2025 Minutes Draft](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chair Katie Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, that the March 17, 2025 Work and Regular Session Minutes was approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[25-0222](#)

Vote to approve the April 21, 2025 Work and Regular Session Minutes

Attachments: [4-21-2025 Minutes Draft](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chair Katie Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, that the April 21, 2025 Work and Regular Session Minutes was approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[25-0192](#)

Vote to approve pyrotechnics display at The Conway Family Farm, 460 Henley Rd. Chapel Hill NC 27517 on May 31, 2025

Attachments: [Attachment A-N.C.G.S. Pyrotechnic Displays](#)
[Attachment B - Pyrotechnic Display Request Conway 2025](#)
[Attachment C - Moncourtis Pyrotechnic License 2025](#)
[Attachment D - Class A Fireworks Certificate of Insurance 2025](#)
[Attachment E - Class A ATF License 2025](#)
[Attachment F - Conway Farm Site Plan 2025](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chair Katie Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, that the pyrotechnics display at The Conway Family Farm, 460 Henley Rd. Chapel Hill NC 27517 on May 31, 2025 was approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[25-0200](#)

Vote to approve the renewal contract with Southern Health Partners for inmate healthcare services for the term beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 for \$266,008.68

Attachments: [Southern Health Partners Contract 5-5-2025](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chair Katie Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, that the renewal contract with Southern Health Partners for inmate healthcare services for the term beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026 for \$266,008.68 was approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[25-0228](#)

Vote to approve a Resolution Concerning NC Bills Introduced for Planning and Zoning

A motion was made by Vice Chair Katie Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, that the Resolution 25- 25 Concerning NC Bills Introduced for Planning and Zoning was adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

End of Consent Agenda

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

[25-0149](#)

Vote to adopt and present a Resolution to proclaim May 11, 2025, through June 15, 2025 as Vulnerable Adult and Elder Abuse and Exploitation Awareness Month in Chatham County

Attachments: [Resolution Proclaiming Vulnerable Adult Month](#)

Chair Howard read aloud the resolution and called for a motion to approve.

The Board of Commissioners paused for a photo.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Katie Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, that the Resolution 25-26 to proclaim May 11, 2025, through June 15, 2025 as Vulnerable Adult and Elder Abuse and Exploitation Awareness Month in Chatham County was adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[25-0228](#)

Vote to approve a Resolution Concerning NC Bills Introduced for Planning and Zoning

Vice-Chair Kenlan read aloud this resolution.

The Board of Commissioners approved the Resolution 25-26 Concerning NC Bills Introduced for Planning and Zoning by the following vote:

PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION

[25-0199](#)

Hold the Public Comment Session is held to give residents an opportunity to speak on any item. The session is no more than thirty minutes long to allow as many as possible to speak. Speakers are limited to no more than three minutes each and may not give their time to another speaker. Speakers are asked to sign up in advance. Comments are always welcome in writing

Attachments: [Click Here To Sign Up For Public Comment](#)

Esta Cohen

I am addressing you today because of the re-evaluations that just took place, and the extraordinary increases in both market and Present Use Value assessments. I am seventy, my husband will be seventy-nine in August, and we actively farm all of the land we own. Everything is in present use value, in either agriculture or woodlands, and the Present Use Value has gone up \$166,248 since the last round of appraisals. The significant increases are on three parcels, we own nine, that have real property on them, the residence, outbuildings, lean-tos, and I have appealed the re-evaluations. None of these buildings are new or in particularly good condition. The appraisal staff have been incredibly easy to work with, and generous with their time. The three parcels with significant assessment changes have Present Use Value increases of \$23,048, \$67,903, and \$74,645. The \$68,000 parcel increase has a conservation easement on it with Triangle Land Conservancy, and nothing has changed other than the house and buildings have gotten older and shabbier. The parcels we farm without buildings on them have increased minimally. I am here to ask you to consider the tax rates that you will be setting for both Present Use Value properties and those that are in full residential market value, as those impact many of my neighbors. They have lived in these same homes for decades. There is a lot of fear. All of us that farm have residences, barns, sheds, outbuildings which seem to disproportionately impact Present Use Value. The county is actively trying to preserve farmland, and we are grateful for that. Farming requires a number of things to be successful. Cooperative weather, water, a market, and the ability to pay our bills, which includes the tax bill. Please remember when setting this cycle's tax rate. Our Present Use Value assessments have gone up each time the County has reappraised property values. If these increases are not mitigated by decreases in the tax rate, farming in Chatham County, in spite of your best intentions, will become untenable. Thank you.

Elaine Chiosso

She wanted to that the Board of Commissioners for all you do and to the staff as well, including our excellent planner, Jason Sullivan. I am here to applaud you on the resolution you just passed to speak out to the General Assembly for their horrible and unfair power grab of local governments, which has been going on for a while, but now it is really untenable. Thank you for speaking to them and I will also speak to legislators. But our senator and representative are fully behind us. Thank you.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

BOARD PRIORITIES

25-0198

Receive a presentation of the recommended Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget

County Manager Bryan Thompson presented the recommended fiscal year 2025-26 budget of \$288.3 million. The proposed budget prioritizes support for education and public safety while also focusing on growth and critical services. The budget proposal calls for a tax rate of 60 cents per \$100 of valuation, which is a decrease from the current rate of 72.5 cents per \$100 of valuation. This is the first budget that reflects the property valuation change of the 2025 revaluation. The "revenue neutral" tax rate is the tax rate that based on those new valuations would generate the same amount of revenue (excluding any new growth/property). The revenue neutral tax rate is 52.96 cents per \$100 valuation.

Thompson said the recommended budget delivers critically needed services and places the County on stable financial footing for the future. The County continues to prioritize support for education. The proposed budget funds an additional \$2.9 million for Chatham County Schools. This includes \$2.4 million to fund estimated state salary adjustments expected in the next state budget, fund anticipated increases in employee benefits and retirements costs, support the continuation of the district's free breakfast and lunch program for all students, provide a small increase in operating expenses, and increase the required transfer to charter schools.

Thompson stated as growth continues within Chatham County, ensuring the safety of all community members is also a priority. The portion of the proposed budget allocated to the Chatham County Sheriff's Office is an approximate increase of \$2.3 million over the FY2025 Revised Budget. This funding would include an additional \$1.1 million in continuation increases – including the first full-year of the new body camera rollout, contractual increases, and increased operating and capital outlay costs. Also included is an additional \$1.2 million in expansion items, including seven additional staff.

Thompson stated that there are several new fees and increases to current fees recommended in this budget which include: Planning – Significant changes to fee structure to increase equity and consistency of fee charges and to account for increasing cost of service provision. Aging Services – Centers for Active Living day trip fee that will equal cost of venue/event admission, allowing Aging Services to book at group rates and create savings for participants. Solid Waste & Recycling – \$20 Increase to Solid Waste Fee (from \$137 to \$157 annually), which is necessary for the enterprise fund to continue to recoup costs generated to run the service.

Thompson stated since FY 26 is a revaluation year, revenue neutral property tax rates for each fire district are also presented. Of the 11 fire departments that provide services within Chatham County, five departments have requested a tax rate reduction from the previous year's rate – only one of those rates is reduced to the revenue neutral rate; however, they are reductions from the FY 25 approved rate. The Parkwood district is served via contract by the City of Durham and is recommended to be reduced to the revenue neutral rate.

Thompson stated that the recommended budget also includes a 4% increase in pay for County staff. While many expenses are necessary to continue movement toward our goals, competitive salaries are essential to attracting and retaining our greatest asset, talented professional staff.

Thompson stated that community members can view the proposed FY26 budget on the County website. The budget is also available for inspection at the County Manager's Office. The public has various opportunities to share their feedback with the Board of Commissioners. Thompson stated that two public hearings will be held. The first on Monday, May 19th, 6:00 p.m. at the Chatham County Historic Courthouse in Pittsboro. And the second on Tuesday, May 20th, 6:00 p.m. at Siler City Town Hall in Siler City.

Thompson reminded the Board of Commissioners that there will be work sessions on the budget after the public hearings and state law requires the Board of Commissioners to approve the budget no later than June 30th.

This Agenda Item was received and filed

[25-0194](#)

Receive a presentation and direct staff on the Chatham County Advisory Committee Policy

Attachments: [Advisory Committee Direction Presentation 5-5-2025](#)
[Information for Advisory Board Policy Direction](#)

Policy Analyst Brenton Hart presented an introduction of the Advisory Committee Policy.

Hart reviewed questions with the Board of Commissioners and asked for direction for each.

Hart stated that the first set of questions is around the membership structure and representation. Hart asked out the number of voting members. Currently each committee is different. Hart asked if the board would like to standardize, if so, what would be the standard. The Board of Commissioners discussed the numbers and would like to have two standard options, either seven or eleven.

Hart asked the Board of Commissioners about the appointment representation. The Board of Commissioners would like to continue the current practice of the individual commissioners making a recommendation or nomination, then the full board making the appointment. The Board of Commissioners expressed a desire to review all the applications for any vacancy along with the individual board member recommendation either by email or placing them in the agenda packet.

Hart asked about the residency and eligibility requirements. Hart stated that the current policy permits not only residents but also business owners and landowners who are not residents but have ties to the county can serve on advisory committees. The Board of Commissioners stated that they would like to keep the current policy.

Hart asked about service on multiple advisory boards. Hart stated allows individuals to serve on multiple advisory boards. The Board of Commissioners agreed that they would like to keep the policy the same.

Hart stated that advisory committees currently use staggered three-year terms, with roughly one-third of members rotating off each year. Hart asked to consider whether to retain the current three-year structure or transition to staggered four-year terms. A four-year term model would align with commissioner election cycles, allowing appointments to roll off at the end of a commissioner's term. This would give newly elected or re-elected commissioners the ability to make recommendations at the start of their term. The Board of Commissioners discussed the length of the term and

decided to keep the policy the same with staggered three-year terms.

Hart asked the Board of Commissioners if committee members should have term limits for cooling-off periods. Hart stated the current policy has no term limits. The Board of Commissioners agreed that they would like to keep the policy the same.

Hart stated that the advisory committee appointments in Chatham County currently follow a July 1 to June 30 cycle, aligning with the fiscal year. This structure can present administrative challenges, particularly because it overlaps with budget adoption, end-of-year reporting, and major grant deadlines. Hart stated that board direction is needed regarding which cycle to use, as this decision will inform how terms are structured and how onboarding, training, and transitions are coordinated in the final advisory committee policy.

Hart shared the following options:

- 1. Maintain the July 1 – June 30 cycle: This keeps the current structure and aligns committee terms with the fiscal year. However, it can conflict with other major county processes and does not align with commissioner election cycles.*
- 2. Shift to a January 1 – December 31 cycle: Aligning terms with the calendar year could simplify public communication, improve consistency with other county timelines, and allow newly elected commissioners, who are typically seated in December, to be ready to make appointments shortly after taking office. This approach would help ensure that appointees reflect current Board representation and priorities.*
- 3. Shift to a March 1 – February 28/29 cycle: This model provides a brief transition period following the November elections and December Board swearing-in. It offers commissioners additional time to consider appointments and ensures that new members are not making immediate decisions before they are fully oriented.*

After discussing the options, the Board of Commissioners decided to change the terms to March 1 to February 28/29.

Hart stated that the current policy allows advisory committee members to continue serving beyond the expiration of their term until a successor is appointed, or for up to one year, whichever comes first. Hart asked if the Board of Commissioners would like to retain this policy or have a firm cut off date. The Board of Commissioners agreed to keep this policy the same.

Hart stated that the current advisory committee policy permits remote and hybrid meetings, a flexibility originally adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several committees continue to meet in this way, though there is no standardized countywide approach to how these meetings are conducted in practice outside of allowance by the current advisory committee policy.

County Attorney Bob Hagemann reviewed recent case law that has raised legal questions regarding quorum, voting, and public access in remote and hybrid settings. The court ruling was tied to the emergency meeting statute and remote participation. Hagemann reviewed the case law for Anson vs State of North Carolina in which the court ruled on two issues. One they ruled, that it was not an emergency, and it should have required at least 48-hour notice as a special meeting. And then the court said that even though you'll recall when Covid hit the General Assembly, passed statutes that expressly authorized remote meetings and laid out all the rules for how that would work. The court held well before that statute passed. Lawyers in this State had a differing opinion about whether implicitly you could do it, or whether it had to be in person. This opinion said that because this was not under a State declared state of emergency, which is what triggered the right to have remote meetings. There was not

a right to have remote participation now. Since you could not establish a quorum by counting people who are not physically located. Hageman stated that one of the things that is a little bit unclear does that necessarily translate to an advisory board that is just making recommendations. But the advisory boards are subject to the open meetings law. He said that he can not tell the Board with certainty that this ruling also applies to your advisory boards, but he thinks within the spirit of the ruling, the better practice would be to require at least sufficient number of members to constitute a quorum to be physically present.

Hagemann stated that one other unanswered question is, if you have a physical attendance establishing a quorum. Can somebody participate remotely. This court ruling did not answer that question. And could that person vote remotely. This opinion does not answer that question either. Hagemann thinks if that factual situation were to come before the court, they are likely to say that only people, only members of the public body who are physically present, can vote. Hagemann stated that whether they could participate and talk is more likely to be allowed. But the cleanest way to do this, since we are not in a state of emergency, is just to say to your advisory boards, members must be there physically present. It also takes a burden off of staff to not have to arrange for remote participation.

The Board of Commissioners discussed virtual participation and feels that it is essential to have, for both the size of the county and the aging population. The Board of Commissioners asked staff to come up with a solution that includes the option of virtual participation.

Hart asked the Board of Commissioners to consider how it would prefer to receive updates from advisory committees moving forward. While the current policy references written reports, in practice most committees provide in-person annual presentations to the Board. Options could include continuing with in-person updates, requiring written reports, or others as the Board sees fit. The Board of Commissioners discussed the reporting and would like to have an annual in-person update with a handout and have staff review a list of standard questions for the committees to answer each year. The Board of Commissioners did not feel that a written report was necessary.

Hart stated that staff will incorporate feedback into the draft policy rewrite a complete draft will be brought back for formal review and approval in June and additional input from the County Attorney will be sought where necessary.

The Board of Commissioners thanked Hart for the continued work on the policy.

This Agenda Item was received and filed

[25-0214](#)

Provide direction for the upcoming Boards and Committee expiring terms

Attachments: [4-29-2025 Advisory Boards and Committees Database](#)

Clerk to the Board Jenifer Johnson shared a list of the committee members with expiring terms on June 30, 2025. Johnson asked if the Board of Commissioners would like staff to reach out to these individuals to see if they would like to be reappointed.

The Board of Commissioners asked staff to reach out to the individuals and gauge their interest in continuing to serve.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[25-0210](#)

Confirm, add, or remove any Board of Commissioners Associations with Non-Profits

Attachments: [Karen Howard Disclosure of Associations with Non Profit Form 2-29-2024](#)
[Amanda Robertson Disclosure of Association with Non Profit Form 1-23-2025](#)
[David Delaney Disclosure of Associations with Non Profit Form 2-29-2024](#)
[Katie Kenlan Disclosure of Associations with Non Profit Form 3-18-2024](#)
[Franklin Gomez Flores Disclosure of Associations with Non Profit Form 4-2-2024](#)

Clerk to the Board Jenifer Johnson reminded the Board of Commissioners of North Carolina General Status 14-234.3 concerning local public officials' associations with non-profits. Johnson shared a list of current non-profits associations with the Board of Commissioners and asked them to update the form and return it to her.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[25-0234](#)

Vote to appoint the District 3 appointment of Terri Tyson to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee with the terms expiring on June 30, 2027

Commissioner Delaney reviewed the application of Terri Tyson, who applied for the Recreation Advisory Committee.

A motion was made by Commissioner Delaney, seconded by Commissioner Gomez Flores, that Terri Tyson be appointed to the Recreation Advisory Committee with a term expiring on June 30, 2027. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Delaney, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

No: 3 - Chair Howard, Vice Chair Kenlan, and Commissioner Robertson

CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk to the Board Jenifer Johnson reminded the Board of Commissioners of the upcoming open enrollment deadline.

MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager Bryan Thompson had no updates.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Delaney stated that he had nothing to report.

Commissioner Robertson stated that she attended the Central Pines regional meeting. David Webb is the Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and outreach in Governor Stein's office. He came and gave a presentation, and we were requested to let him know if there are any people that we would like to be honored in our community. They also shared with him our concerns about the bills that were in a resolution today and asked him to please bring those concerns back to the Governor.

Then they had a speaker with FISU Summer World University Games which will be held in the triangle in four years.

Vice Chair Kenlan stated that the Hall River Assembly received around ten phone calls after the Tri River letters went out informing people that they are the utility service, and it caused some confusion. So, the Association held an event to help answer questions. The Tri River Utility Director was able to be there to answer questions. She attended the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners zoom call with the North Carolina Health and Human Services Director and he helped to inform counties of how changes in Federal funding could impact our Medicaid expansion. She attended the NAACP mother of the year ceremony, and congratulated Addie Lewis, who was the Honoree, and she and Chair Howard had a meeting with the School Superintendent and the School Board Chair and Vice Chair, along with county staff.

Commissioner Gomez Flores thanked everybody involved with the resolution regarding local governments and he shared that there is another appointment for the Board of Health.

Chair Howard congratulated Commissioner Gomez Flores on winning the chicken picking at the chicken festival this weekend. Howard stated that she spoke at the Earth Day event at Carolina Meadows.

CLOSED SESSION

25-0212

Vote to go into closed session pursuant to § 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged

A motion was made by Commissioner Robertson, seconded by Vice Chair Kenlan, to go into closed session pursuant to § 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

25-0213

Vote to come out of closed session

A motion was made by Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, to come out of closed session. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Chair Howard called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Commissioner Amanda Robertson, seconded by Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores, that this meeting was adjourned. The

motion carried by the following vote:

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