

**MINUTES
BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING**

The Burke County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, April 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
Margaret Pierce, Finance Director / Deputy County Manager
Dylan Laws, Wilson, Lackey, Rohr & Hall P.C.
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brittain called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

INVOCATION

Dr. Wayne A. Johnson, Sr., Shiloh AME Church, delivered the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dylan Laws, Attorney, Wilson, Lackey, Rohr & Hall, P.C., led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: To approve the agenda as amended: removal of Consent Item No. 15 (Budget Amendment No. 21 – the grant given directly to TDA, not the county), move Item For Decision No. 2 to Consent (the second parcel belongs to BCPS and the easement was approved at the BOE's April 8, 2025, meeting), and removal of Item for Decision No. 3 (Finance needs additional time to assess whether this policy change is needed).

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

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion: To approve the January 7, 2025 (pre-agenda), January 21, 2025 (regular), February 4, 2025 (pre-agenda), and February 14, 2025 (recessed) meeting minutes as written.

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

PRESENTATIONS

BOC - PROCLAMATION CELEBRATING BETTY CHANDLER ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

Chairman Brittain requested approval of the following proclamation commemorating the 100th birthday of Burke County resident Laura Elizabeth "Betty" Poore Chandler on April 21, 2025. He read the proclamation, presented Ms. Chandler with a walking stick, and joined the Board for a commemorative photo.



Depicted from left to right (front row): Joanna Gordon (great-granddaughter), Heather Gordon (great-granddaughter), Betty Chandler, Aubree Farris (great-great-granddaughter), Nicole Farris (great-granddaughter) holding Jameson Farris (great-great-granddaughter), Linda Shull (daughter), and Stephanie Mitchell (soon to be great-granddaughter-in-law). Depicted left to right (back row): Commissioner Stroud, Commissioner Burns, Terry Shull (grandson), Sherry Gordon (granddaughter), Chairman Brittain, Vice Chairman Smith, Commissioner Barrier, Rex Shull (son-in-law), and Seth Farris (great-grandson-in-law).

Motion: To approve Proclamation No. 2025-05.

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

Proclamation No. 2025-05 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

PROCLAMATION CELEBRATING BURKE COUNTY RESIDENT
LAURA ELIZABETH (BETTY) POORE CHANDLER ON THE OCCASION OF HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

WHEREAS, Mrs. Laura Elizabeth (Betty) Poore Chandler, a 76-year resident of Burke County, will celebrate her 100th birthday on May 3, 2025; and

WHEREAS, she was born in Moore County, North Carolina, on May 3, 1925, to Dewy and Nettie Prince Poore and was one of six (6) children. She moved to Buncombe County when she was six (6) years old; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Chandler married Mr. James Robert (JR) Chandler on June 7, 1941—six (6) months to the day before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Mr. Chandler served honorably under General Patton's 3rd Battalion in World War II and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. They were married for 26 years until his passing at age 45 and had two (2) daughters; and

WHEREAS, the Chandlers moved to Burke County in 1947 when Mr. Chandler joined the NC State Highway Patrol and was assigned here. She has lived in Burke County ever since, except for one and a half years in Watauga County; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Chandler has four (4) grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren, and seven (7) great-great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, she worked as a supervisor at Shadowline, volunteered with the American Cancer Society, and taught children and adults at her church to make Chrismons for the annual Christmas tree; and

WHEREAS, she is a talented quilter who has made quilts for many family members, taught several great-grandchildren to quilt, and gifted handmade quilts to church members, especially for weddings; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Chandler is a woman of faith who has been a member of Calvin Heights Baptist Church since the mid-1950s and attended regularly until her health declined; and

WHEREAS, the Burke County Board of Commissioners wishes Mrs. Chandler good health and happiness throughout her 100th year and beyond;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that the Burke County Board of Commissioners does hereby recognize and congratulate Mrs. Laura Elizabeth (Betty) Chandler on the celebration of her 100th birthday and extends its best wishes for continued joy and well-being. Further, the Burke County Board of Commissioners declares Saturday, May 3, 2025, as Mrs. Laura Elizabeth (Betty) Chandler Day in Burke County in special recognition of her 100th birthday.

Approved this 21st day of April 2025.

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

BOC - PROCLAMATION DECLARING APRIL 18, 2025, AS LINEMEN APPRECIATION DAY

Chairman Brittain requested the Board's approval of a proclamation designating April 18, 2025, as Linemen Appreciation Day in Burke County. He noted that, given the recent impact of Hurricane Helene on the community, residents likely have an even greater appreciation for the vital work



linemen perform. Chairman Brittain then read excerpts from the proclamation. He invited any linemen present to come forward for recognition, and then the Clerk took a commemorative photo. After the photo was taken, Chairman Brittain expressed appreciation for all their hard work and opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To approve Proclamation No. 2025-04.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Randy Burns, Commissioner

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Proclamation No. 2025-04 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

PROCLAMATION
LINEMEN APPRECIATION DAY
APRIL 18, 2025

WHEREAS, linemen play a vital role in ensuring the safe and reliable delivery of electricity to homes, businesses, and essential services across Burke County, throughout the State of North Carolina and the entire nation; and

WHEREAS, their service is essential to the daily lives of our citizens, supporting economic development, education, healthcare, and countless other facets of modern life; and

WHEREAS linemen must work under dangerous conditions, oftentimes far from their homes and families, to construct and maintain the energy infrastructure across the United States; and

WHEREAS, linemen work with thousands of volts of electricity high atop power lines 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to keep electricity flowing; tirelessly facing all weather conditions and great personal risk to maintain and restore power, ensuring the well-being and safety of our communities; and often serving as first responders during storms and other catastrophic events, working to make the scene safe for other public safety heroes; and

WHEREAS, linemen put their lives on the line every day with little recognition from the community regarding the danger of their work.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Burke County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaim the day of April

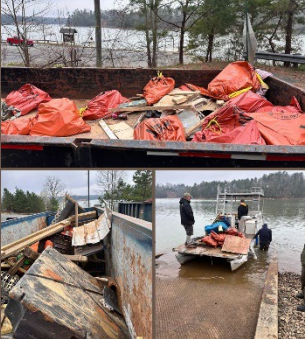
18, 2025, as "Linemen Appreciation Day" in Burke County and thanks all linemen, whether employed by a local ElectriCity such as the Town of Drexel and the City of Morganton or by a local energy cooperative like Rutherford Electric Membership Corporation or by a large private provider like Duke Energy, for all they do for our citizens that makes us able to enjoy health, safety, comfort and quality of life every day.

Approved this 21st day of April 2025.

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

LJAWNS - LAKE JAMES LITTER CLEAN-UP REPORT

Mr. Howard Morgan with the Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society presented a report on the Lake James clean-up effort held on March 15, 2025. Highlights of his presentation were as follows:

Lake James Litter Sweep		Cleaning up. Coming together. Caring for our lake.	
			
2025 Impact 82 students participated & 47 adults volunteered 		2025 Impact 9.98 tons of litter collected 	

The event was a collaborative effort involving students, adults, and various local partners. A total of 8.98 tons of debris were collected and hauled from the site, primarily from the lake and shoreline areas. Additional waste—estimated to be another ton or more—was gathered but could not be placed in dumpsters due to capacity limits. There were 13 boats deployed for on-water efforts.

Due to storm damage at Lake James State Park, traditional staging areas were unavailable, and operations were relocated to the Canal Bridge. Despite logistical challenges, the cleanup drew strong participation, including 82 students and 47 adults.

Mr. Morgan recognized several key contributors who made the event successful:

- Law enforcement and public safety: Burke County Sheriff's Department, including Sheriff Hinceman, as well as EMS.
- Local organizations and partners: Lake James Environmental Association, Mimosa Boat Landing, and Lands End Campground.
- Businesses and individuals: Ken Brooks, Nick Parker, and Phillip Leonard (dock builders), Corbin Hightower (equipment support), and Jimmy and Debbie Crooks (roadside collection).

Jerry Fantry, current chair of the LJAWNS chapter, recognized Mr. Howard for coordinating the event, as well as educators Michael Spath (WPCC) and Adam Mazzolini (Freedom High School) for helping recruit student volunteers.

Mr. Morgan recognized Marty Revis and Mary Stevenson for their coordination of supplies, including vests, road signs, first-aid kits, and trash bags. Mr. Revis expressed his appreciation to the Board for their support.

Mr. Morgan recognized Cliff Bechtel, who coordinated food for volunteers. Mr. Bechtel reported that they received generous contributions from Chick-fil-A (150 sandwiches), Burger King (50 sandwiches), Arby's (100 sandwiches), Wendy's (100 Frosties), and Papa John's (12 pizzas).

Mr. Morgan also recognized Rik and Laurie Craig, representing the East Shores Board. Mr. Craig discussed the history of the cleanup effort, which began over 20 years ago at East Shores and has since expanded. He raised ongoing concerns about the "Portage Area" on North Firehouse Road, a former roadbed on Duke Energy property that has become an unregulated parking and dumping site. Laurie noted that despite prior assurances from Duke representatives, no improvements have been made. He urged the Board to consider contacting Duke Energy to take corrective action before the issue worsens.

In closing, Mr. Morgan reiterated his gratitude to the County, volunteers, businesses, and all who contributed to making the clean-up possible.

Chairman Brittain expressed appreciation and opened the floor 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

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMM. DEV. – ZMA 2025-01, 2907 NC 18 S, REZONING - PUBLIC HEARING - 6:00 P.M.

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

REZONING REQUEST: ZMA-2025-01

Applicant: Ryan Honeycutt

PIN: 2712-54-8374

Address: 2907 NC 18 S, Morganton, NC 28655

Request: Rezone a parcel of approximately .27-acres from Residential-Two (R-2) to General Business (G-B)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

REQUEST

The Community Development Department has received a rezoning application from Ryan Honeycutt to rezone one (1) parcel of land totaling approximately .27-acres from the current zoning of Residential-Two (R-2) to General Business (G-B). The site has an existing commercial structure, and the owner would like the zoning to match the use of the property.



SITE ANALYSIS AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

The property, located at PIN No. 2712-54-8374, lies within the Morganton Township and the Salem Fire District of Burke County. It is not in a designated watershed area and is accessible via NC 18 South. The existing building, approximately 1,500 square feet, has been used as a secondhand or flea market store and was built for commercial purposes. The owner, who recently acquired the property, wishes to rezone it to match the commercial usage. General Business zoning is considered the most appropriate for this location.

The area consists of mixed zoning, with Residential, Industrial and General Business zoned properties nearby.

Existing Zoning and Land Uses within the Surrounding Area		
	Current Zoning	Existing Land Uses
North	Residential Two R-2	Vacant
South	Industrial & General Business	Location of former or active businesses
East	Residential Two R-2	Vacant
West	Residential Two R-2	Residential homes / vacant

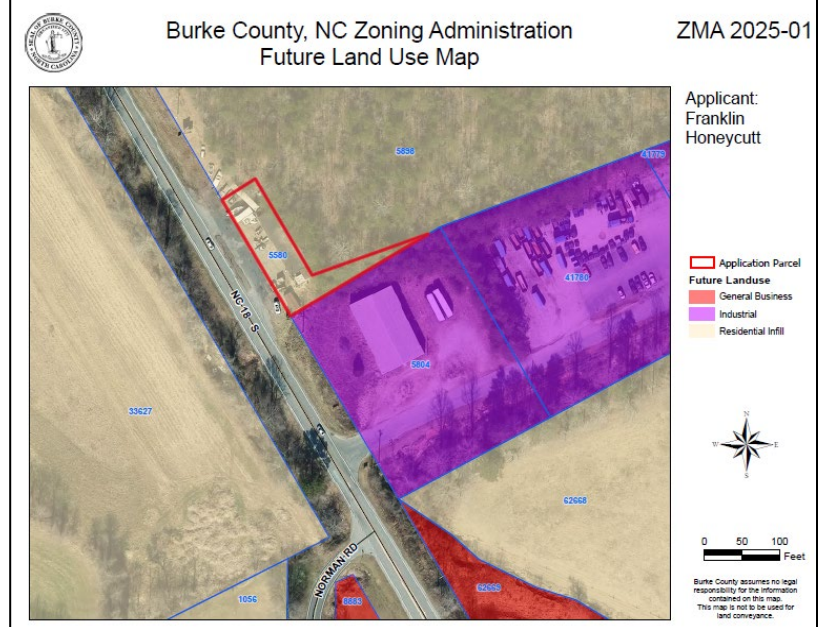
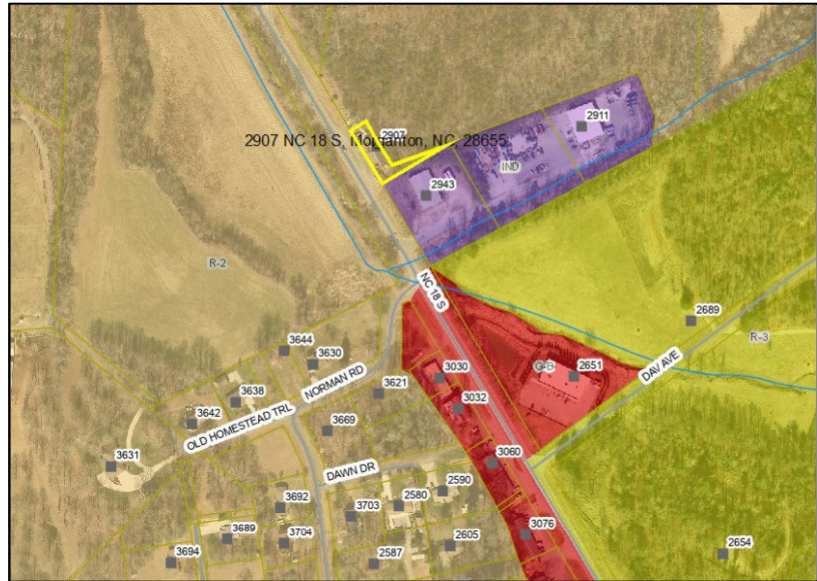
CURRENT ZONING

The parcel is currently zoned Residential-Two (R-2), though the surrounding areas feature a mix of residential and non-residential zones. Nearby businesses include a recently opened Dollar General and older industrial and storage facilities to the south. This area is a mixed-use zone.

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 puts the subject parcel in the residential infill land use category. As in many cases, the future land use map closely resembles the current zoning map. If the zoning is approved, the future land use map would be adjusted to General Business accordingly.

The Blueprint Burke Land Use shows residential infill, which anticipates allowing a wide variety of future residential uses. This specific area down on NC 18 S is a mixed-use area with residential, commercial and other business activities. The subject property has never been used residentially and has had a commercial structure on it since the 1950s.

STAFF COMMENTS

Staff work diligently to ensure zoning aligns with a property's specific use. This property was likely overlooked when zoning was established in Burke County approximately 27 years ago.

- The Blueprint Burke Strategic Land Use Plan recognizes and promotes residential infill while also supporting the growth of local businesses.
- The building was originally constructed for commercial use, possibly as a small restaurant, and was most recently used as a retail and second-hand shop.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Board reviewed the request on February 27, 2025, and opened public comment. No one spoke on this matter except for the applicant, Ryan Honeycutt. The Planning Board voted

unanimously (7-0) to recommend approval of the request.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments from the Board; there being none, he opened the public hearing at 6:34 p.m. The Public Hearing Notice was published in the News Herald on April 8 and April 15, 2025. Further, the notice was also posted on the County's website (www.burkenc.org) on April 8, 2025. There being no one present to address the Board, the public hearing was closed at 6:34 p.m.

Motion: To adopt Ordinance No. 2025-03 as it relates to ZMA 2025-01 for the parcel corresponding to PIN 2712-54-8374 to rezone a single parcel from Residential-Two (R-2) District to General Business (G-B) District and to adjust the Future Land Use Map to General Business for this parcel. Further, the request is reasonable and in the public interest because:

- **The Blueprint Burke Strategic Land Use Plan acknowledges and supports the development of local businesses.**
- **The building was constructed for commercial use and rezoning will align the use with proper zoning.**

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Ordinance No. 2025-03 reads as follows:

Burke County
North Carolina

An Ordinance Amending the Official Burke County Zoning Map
ZMA 2025-01

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

A .27-acre parcel located at 2907 NC 18 S in Morganton, N.C., and identified by PIN: 2712-54-8374, shall be rezoned from the Residential Two (R-2) zoning district to the General Business (G-B) district.

Consistency Statement

The Commissioners find that Ordinance No. 2025-03 related to rezoning application ZMA 2025-01 and located at 2907 NC 18 S in Morganton, N.C., to be currently inconsistent with the Blueprint Burke Strategic Plan and the Future Land Use map because it shows this property in the Residential Infill category. Further, the Commissioners acknowledge that the area has a mixture of residential and some non-residential uses adjacent to the subject parcel, and the current zoning reflects that. The Blueprint Burke Plan supports the alignment of current long-standing uses with consistent zoning. Therefore, the change to the Future Land Use Map is reasonable and supported by the plan. The Future Land Use Map will be adjusted to the General Business land use category for the property.

Adopted this 21st day of April 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

COMM. DEV. - ZMA 2025-02, ASHTON DRIVE, REZONING - PUBLIC HEARING - 6:00 P.M.

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

REQUEST

The Community Development Department has received a rezoning request from Mickey and Debbie Evans to rezone a 1.15-acre parcel from Residential-Two (R-2) to General Business (G-B). The applicants, who own and operate Evans Construction Company on an adjacent property, intend to use the rezoned parcel for equipment storage and business-related operations.

SITE ANALYSIS AND SURROUNDING AREA

The vacant parcel (PIN 2773-13-5760) is located in the Icard Township, within the Icard Fire District of Burke County, and falls within the Lake Hickory Watershed. It is located along Ashton Drive, a private road, and is situated three (3) parcels in from Icard Rhodhiss Road. The parcel is directly behind Evans Construction Company, which has been in operation since 1970 and is owned by the applicants. The construction company's property is currently zoned General Business (G-B), and the owners wish to expand operations by utilizing the adjacent parcel.



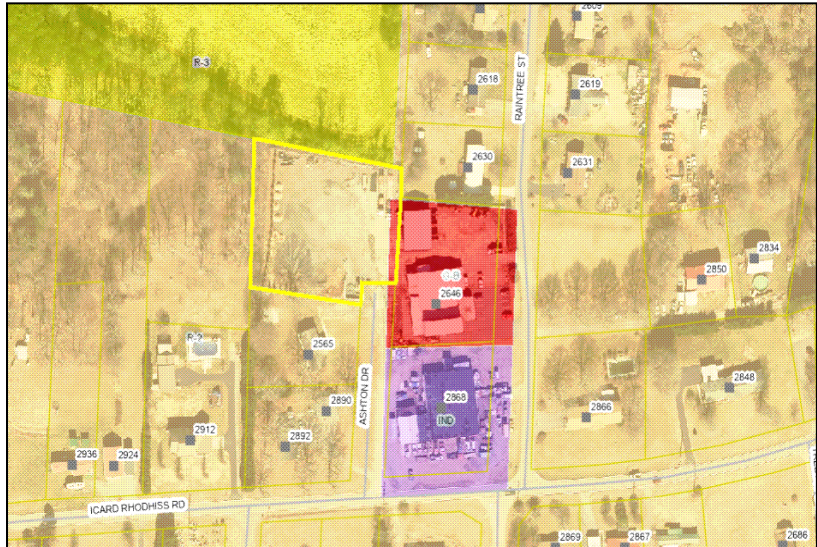
To the south, the parcel is adjacent to an Industrial-zoned area, which houses KidsBaron (currently vacant). The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with small clusters of commercial activity.

Existing Zoning and Land Uses within the Surrounding Area		
	Current Zoning	Existing Land Uses
North	Residential Three R-3	Vacant

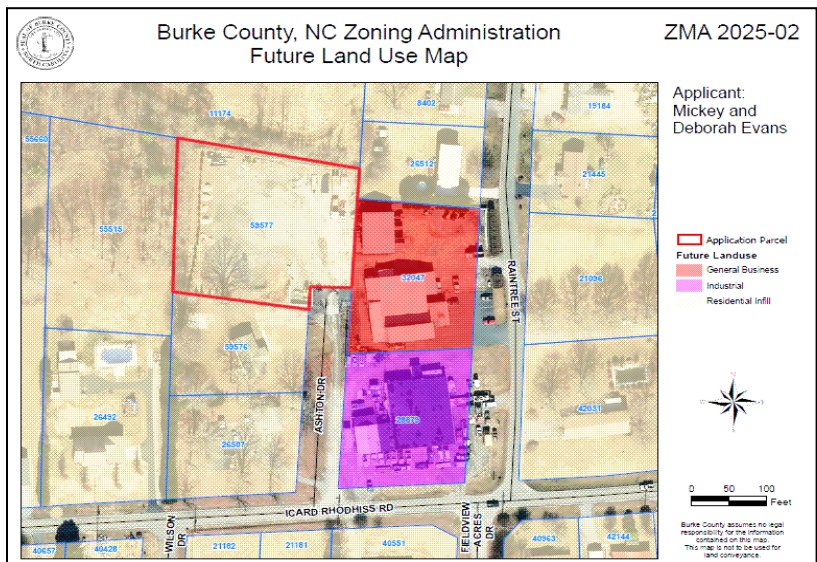
South	Residential Two R-2	Residential home
East	General Business / Industrial	Construction company; commercial business
West	Residential Two R-2	Residential home

CURRENT ZONING

The subject parcel and surrounding area are currently zoned as Residential-Two (R-2) and Residential-Three (R-3). Evans Construction Company has operated at its current location since approximately 1970. When zoning was first established in Burke County, the business parcel was designated as General Business (G-B). Mr. Evans now seeks to expand his operations and intends to use the adjacent parcel to support his existing business.



Many of the surrounding parcels were originally owned by Evans Construction Company, which developed the neighborhood and built homes on them. New commercial uses are required to have a perimeter landscape buffer when they are established, between their property and residentially zoned parcels. Some plantings are in place now, and additional plant material in a 10-foot-wide buffer, predominantly made up of evergreen plantings, would be required if the rezoning is approved.



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 (*see map below*) puts the subject parcel in the *residential infill* land use category. As in many cases, the future land use map closely resembles the current zoning map. The adjacent tract is placed in the *general business* land use category. If the zoning is approved, the future land use map would be adjusted accordingly.

The future land use map shows *residential infill*, which anticipates allowing a wide variety of residential uses. Although the community is experiencing a housing shortage, the change for this

acre tract will allow a local construction business to expand at its existing location.

STAFF COMMENTS

There has been interest from the owner to rezone this parcel before. The Planning Board voted 4-2 to recommend approval of the rezoning request on June 24, 2021; however, the Board of Commissioners voted 2-1 to deny the rezoning, with two (2) commissioners absent, during their August 17, 2021, regular meeting.

- The Blueprint Burke Future Land Use Map acknowledges and supports residential infill and also supports the reasonable expansion of local businesses.
- The business, Evans Construction, has been a neighbor here since about 1970. If the rezoning is approved, a landscape buffer will be required on the parcel between the residentially zoned parcels.
- A perimeter landscape buffer (page 4 - 201) is required to be a minimum of 10' in width with a single staggered row of trees (at least 75% evergreens and the other 25% may consist of ornamental trees and bushes) not to exceed six (6) feet apart.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Board reviewed the presentation from staff. During public comment, Mr. Evans spoke in favor of the request and noted that the hours of operation are weekdays only and that truck traffic is limited. A neighbor, Terri Swanson, spoke against the request and said the current impact on her parcel makes living there difficult. The Board closed public comment, and a motion was made to approve the request, which was not seconded. Another motion was made to recommend denial of the request, and the vote was 6-1 to deny.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Mr. Glines responded to a question about buffers from Commissioner Burns. There being no further discussion, Chairman Brittain opened the public hearing at 6:40 p.m. The Public Hearing Notice was published in the News Herald on April 8 and April 15, 2025. Further, the notice was also posted on the County's website (www.burkenc.org) on April 8, 2025.

Terri Swanson, 2912 Icard Rhodhiss Road, spoke in opposition to the request, stating that she owns the two (2) lots closest to Evans Construction and was present two (2) years ago when the same request was brought before the Commissioners and denied. Despite that decision, she alleged that Mr. Evans has continued to operate his business on the property, and no changes have occurred in that time. She emphasized that the surrounding properties have developed into residential neighborhoods with numerous new single-family homes and growing families. She expressed concerns about the safety of school children due to increased truck traffic in the area and urged the board to preserve the residential nature of the community.

Mickey Evans, owner of Evans Construction, spoke in support of his rezoning request. He stated that his family's third-generation paving and grading business has operated in the same Burke County location for 55 years, with hours from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and no previous complaints from neighbors. The purpose of the rezoning is to allow for the parking of company equipment on an adjacent lot recently purchased; he emphasized that this would not result in any increase in traffic or changes to existing operations. Mr. Evans explained that the limited space available on the current lot has created safety concerns for employees moving equipment.

Mr. Evans noted that after the initial denial of his request (by a 2–1 vote), he visited neighboring property owners to gauge their opinions. He reported that no other residents besides Terry Swanson expressed opposition, and that he collected 22 signatures—including all adjoining property owners—supporting the rezoning.

He explained that the property in question is fully enclosed by a fenced and gated perimeter with barbed wire, security cameras, and is locked outside business hours. Deliveries and trash pickups occur during operating hours only. Evans concluded by emphasizing the importance of providing a safer, more functional work environment for his employees and asked that the board consider the community and employee support demonstrated through the signed petitions. The letters were provided to the Clerk and are hereby incorporated into the meeting minutes by reference.

Jean Miller, an office employee with Evans Construction for the past five (5) years, spoke in support of the rezoning request. She emphasized that the company is very limited in space at its current location. The existing garage occupies over half the lot, and additional structures are used to cover dump trucks, tractors, trailers, and other vehicles. With so many large vehicles operating in a tight space, maneuvering has become difficult and potentially hazardous. Ms. Miller expressed concern about employee safety, noting that workers fuel and move large trucks daily in close quarters, often without the benefit of backup cameras. She shared that there have been several near misses involving pedestrians and vehicles backing up. Access to the adjacent vacant lot would allow the company to relocate some equipment and reduce congestion, improving overall safety.

Vice Chairman Smith asked Mr. Glines whether a trucking company owner would need county permission to park business vehicles on their own property. Mr. Glines explained that the underlying zoning must align with the business activity, so permission would be required if the use doesn't match the zoning designation. Vice Chairman Smith then posed a hypothetical about Mr. Evans operating without permission. Mr. Glines responded that in that scenario, complaints would be investigated and responded to. There have been complaints from Ms. Swanson, which prompted site visits, and trucks have been observed staging and moving through Ashton Drive. Mr. Glines added that Mr. Evans is also a farmer, which has allowed him to store some tractors on his personal property. Further, he explained that the Burke Blueprint Strategic Plan balances the county's goal to support local businesses with community concerns and ensuring that any growth aligns with existing ordinances, including buffering between commercial and residential uses.

Mr. Glines responded to a clarifying question from Commissioner Stroud about the entrance. Chairman Brittain asked Mr. Glines whether the rezoning request could be handled as a conditional use, allowing for conditions to be imposed. Mr. Glines responded that Evans Construction already operates within typical business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday), and they do not work on weekends. Mr. Glines clarified that the business does not involve heavy industrial activities like stone crushing or asphalt mixing. Rather, it serves as a base of operations where employees report and equipment is stored. Given the low-impact nature of the use, he noted that, considering they operate during typical business hours, he was unsure off the top of his head what practical conditions to impose.

Ms. Swanson expressed that her concerns arise from the presence of large piles of asphalt. She noted that the board had indicated there would be no way to impose restrictions if the property

were zoned for business use. While she does not oppose the use of Ashton Drive for access, her objection lies with the proposed change from residential to commercial zoning, emphasizing that such a change would allow unrestricted commercial activity on the property.

Mr. Evans responded to Chairman Brittain about the entrance used to access his property. He then explained the purpose of the rezoning to allow for additional parking space and that there is no anticipated increase in traffic. Both Commissioners Barrier and Burns acknowledged receiving several calls in support of the rezoning request.

There being no one else present to address the Board, the public hearing was closed at 6:34 p.m. and Chairman Brittain opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To adopt Ordinance No. 2025-04 as it relates to ZMA 2025-02 for the parcel corresponding to PIN 2773-13-5760 to rezone a single parcel from Residential-Two (R-2) District to General Business (G-B) District and to adjust the Future Land Use Map to general business for this parcel. The Board finds that the request is reasonable and in the public interest because:

- **The Blueprint Burke Strategic Land Use Plan acknowledges other non-residential uses in the area and supports the expansion of local businesses.**
- **The zoning code provides for a perimeter landscape buffer to manage impacts on residential areas.**

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Mike Stroud, Commissioner

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Ordinance No. 2025-04 reads as follows:

Burke County
North Carolina

An Ordinance Amending the Official Burke County Zoning Map
ZMA 2025-02

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

A 1.15-acre parcel located at Ashton Drive, Connelly Springs, NC, and identified by PIN 2773135760, shall be rezoned from the Residential Two (R-2) zoning district to the General Business (G-B) district.

Consistency Statement:

The Commissioners find that Ordinance No. 2025-04 related to rezoning application ZMA 2025-02 and located at Ashton Drive, Connelly Springs, NC, is currently inconsistent with the Blueprint Burke Strategic Plan and the Future Land Use map because it shows this property in the Residential Infill category. Further, the Commissioners acknowledge that the area has a mixture of residential and some non-residential uses adjacent to the subject parcel, with a long-standing commercial use there. The Blueprint Burke Plan supports the growth of existing businesses. Therefore, the change to the Future Land Use Map is reasonable and supported by the plan. The

Future Land Use Map would be adjusted to the General Business land use category for the property.

Adopted this 21st day of April 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

INFORMAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Kelly Pearson, a Guardian ad Litem and adoptive mother of four (4) children with special needs, emphasized the urgent need for improved mental health services for children in Burke County, particularly those with intellectual and developmental delays. Ms. Pearson described the long wait times for counseling and the lack of emergency mental health options beyond the ER hallway at Grace Hospital. She urged the Board to prioritize investments in timely, trauma-informed, and child-focused mental health and developmental support services as they consider how to use opioid settlement funds. Speaking as both a parent and an advocate, she asked leaders to ensure the system is equipped to support vulnerable children before they reach crisis.

Amy Kincaid, a city resident and district administrator for the Guardian ad Litem program, thanked the board for supporting a proclamation for Child Abuse Prevention Month. She emphasized that this issue should not be minimized and urged the board to make the welfare of children in Burke County's custody a top priority. Ms. Kincaid highlighted serious concerns, including children sleeping at DSS due to a lack of placements, high staff turnover, and low morale in the department. She noted a public "meal train" was created to provide food for these children, underscoring the urgent need for support. Ms. Kincaid mentioned efforts to engage local churches to promote fostering and offered to present more information to the board. She closed by referencing the proclamation's call to invest in prevention and support for families and expressed her prayers for the county's children.

Kathy Helms spoke on behalf of 80-year-old widow Nancy Harden, a resident of 4131 Valley Trail who could not attend due to caring for her great-grandson. Ms. Helms, having lived with Harden for 18 months, shared firsthand concerns about the deteriorating conditions of Valley Trail and Willie Ray Road—both non-state-maintained roads near Jamestown Road and I-40. Serving at least 30 homes, the roads are in poor condition and hazardous, especially in wet weather. A culvert near the entrance is also unstable due to damage from Hurricane Helene. Despite these issues, new homes and mobile units continue to be placed in the area. Ms. Helms described the community as united but without the financial means to fix the issue. She asked the county commissioners to advocate for the residents.

There was no one else to address the Board; therefore, Chairman Brittain closed this portion of the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

At the request of the Board, Brian Epley, County Manager, reviewed the following 26 items on the consent agenda, which were approved by a single motion.

911 - NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week (NPSTW) was first established in 1981 and has been nationally recognized since 1994. These professionals handle millions of emergency calls each year, ensuring that law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services are dispatched swiftly and accurately. Their work is instrumental in saving lives and protecting communities. This was a request to approve a proclamation declaring April 13 - 19, 2025, as NPSTW.

Motion: To approve Proclamation No. 2025-06.

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

Proclamation No. 2025-06 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

PROCLAMATION
DECLARING APRIL 13 – 19, 2025
AS NATIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK

WHEREAS, Congress and the President of the United States have established the second full week of April as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week to honor the vital contributions of emergency telecommunicators across the country; and

WHEREAS, National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week was first established in 1981 and has been nationally recognized since 1994, serving as an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the essential role of emergency communication professionals; and

WHEREAS, when an emergency occurs, the prompt response of police officers, firefighters, and paramedics is critical to the protection of life and the preservation of property, and public safety telecommunicators serve as the single vital link between first responders and persons seeking immediate assistance during an emergency; and

WHEREAS, these dedicated professionals handle millions of emergency calls each year, ensuring that the appropriate emergency response services are dispatched swiftly and accurately; and

WHEREAS, public safety telecommunicators are the unseen first responders, providing life-saving assistance and vital information to those in distress, often making the difference between life and death; and

WHEREAS, each dispatcher exhibits compassion, understanding, and professionalism in their duties, working tirelessly to ensure public safety, protect communities, and support first responders;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Burke County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim the week of April 13 – 19, 2025, as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week and encourage all residents to express their appreciation for the dedication, diligence, and professionalism of our public safety telecommunicators who work tirelessly to keep our community safe.

Approved this 21st day of April 2025.

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

ASFI - PROCLAMATION DECLARING APRIL 2025 AS CRUELTY TO ANIMALS PREVENTION MONTH

The following proclamation declares April 2025 as “Animal Cruelty Prevention Month,” and urges all citizens to work together to promote the humane treatment of animals and prevent cruelty in all forms.

Motion: To approve Proclamation No. 2025-03.

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

Proclamation No. 2025-03 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY
 NORTH CAROLINA

**PROCLAMATION DECLARING APRIL AS
 CRUELTY TO ANIMALS PREVENTION MONTH**

WHEREAS, animals play a vital role in our lives, providing companionship, service, and protection, while also contributing to the ecological balance of our community; and

WHEREAS, the prevention of cruelty to animals is essential to the well-being of all living creatures and reflects the moral and ethical values of our society; and

WHEREAS, countless animals suffer abuse, neglect, and abandonment each year, and it is the responsibility of the community to advocate for their humane treatment and welfare; and

WHEREAS, research shows a strong link between animal cruelty and broader social issues such as poverty, domestic violence, and mental health challenges, and addressing animal abuse can contribute to a more compassionate and safer society for both people and animals; and

WHEREAS, financial hardship can lead to unintentional neglect when pet owners lack access to necessary resources, highlighting the importance of community-based support such as pet food pantries and affordable veterinary care; and

WHEREAS, education and outreach programs increase awareness about responsible pet ownership, animal welfare laws, and the importance of reporting animal cruelty; and

WHEREAS, Burke County Animal Services, the Animal Services Foundation, and local rescue organizations work tirelessly to protect animals from harm, provide care for those in need, and promote spaying and neutering programs to reduce pet overpopulation; and

WHEREAS, designating April as Cruelty to Animals Prevention Month encourages residents to be vigilant in recognizing and reporting animal abuse, supporting local animal welfare efforts, and fostering a culture of compassion and responsibility toward all animals; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Burke County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim the month of April as Cruelty to Animals Prevention Month in Burke County, North Carolina, and urges all citizens to work together to promote the humane treatment of animals and prevent cruelty in all forms.

Approved this 21st day of April 2025.

/s/: Jeffrey C. Brittain

Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman

Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

BOC - 2025 RULES OF PROCEDURE - REVISIONS

It is the Board's practice to review, amend as needed, and adopt its Rules of Procedures (ROP.) The 2025 ROP is largely based on the 4th Edition, 2017, Suggested Rules of Procedure for the Board of County Commissioners, which was published by the SOG (School of Government) and authored by Trey Allen. Several housekeeping revisions are needed:

Note: Text to be removed is printed in red and contains a strikethrough mark. New text is shown in red bold font.

Part V. Types of Meetings

Rule 10. Pre-Agenda Meetings

In accordance with its local practice, the board shall hold a pre-agenda on the first (1st) ~~Tuesday~~ **Monday** of each month, except that if a pre-agenda meeting day is on a holiday on which county offices are closed or held in conjunction with an organizational meeting on the first (1) Monday in December in even numbered years, the meeting shall be held on the next business day. The meeting shall be held at the County Board Room and begin at 3:00 p.m. The board shall adopt a resolution establishing the meeting schedule each year consistent with this rule. The purpose of a pre-agenda meeting is to set the agenda for the board's next regular meeting by reviewing and discussing each item on the agenda and determining its specific location or placement on the agenda (ex.: presentation, consent agenda, scheduled public hearing, items for decision or reports). Historically, the board does not take action at pre-agenda meetings except for approving the agenda and adjourning the meeting. **However, the acceptance of the monthly update**

from the Department of Social Services and the quarterly report from the Health Department is permitted. Additionally, However, at the discretion of the chair, any decision item set forth in the agenda packet may be acted upon during the pre-agenda meeting if the matter is considered to be time sensitive or waiting until the regular meeting may be detrimental to the county.

Rule 11. Regular Meetings

(a) Regular Meeting Schedule. The board shall hold a regular meeting on the third (3rd) **Tuesday Monday** of each month, except that if a regular meeting day is on a holiday on which county offices are closed, the meeting shall be held on the next business day. The meeting shall be held at the County Board Room and begin at 6:00 p.m. The board shall adopt a resolution establishing the meeting schedule each year consistent with this rule. For purposes of these rules, a work session of the board constitutes a regular meeting if it appears on the board's duly adopted schedule of regular meetings. In all other cases, a work session is a special meeting to which the provisions of Rule 12 apply.

Part IV. Organization of the Board

Rule 8. Organizational Meeting; Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

(c) Order of Business

(2) *Odd-Numbered Years.* As the first order of business, the board will elect the chair and vice chair. As the second order of business, the board will vote on the appointment of the clerk to the board and the county attorney **as needed**.

Part X. Public Hearings and Comment Periods

Rule 38. Public Comment Periods

(b) Rules for Public Comment Periods. The board may adopt reasonable rules for public comment periods that, among other things,

- fixes the maximum time allotted to each speaker at 3 minutes,
- provide for the designation of spokespersons for groups supporting or opposing the same positions,
- provide for the selection of delegates from groups supporting or opposing the same positions when the number of persons wishing to attend the public comment period exceeds the capacity of the meeting room (so long as arrangements are made for those excluded from the meeting room to listen to the public comment period),
- provide for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the public comment period,
- requires each speaker to pre-registered with the clerk in advance or complete a "speaker's card" and submit it to the clerk before the meeting convenes,
- the order in which speakers are called to the podium is at the chairman's discretion,
- provides the chairman latitude to allow a speaker to address the board without having completed a "speaker's card",
- prohibits the extension of a speaker's time without a majority vote by the Board; and
- prohibits the transfer of a speaker's time to another speaker; and
- **prohibits the use of videos, pictures, or other illustrative items from being displayed by those making public comments.**

Motion: To approve the aforementioned revisions to the 2025 Rules of Procedure for the Burke County Board of Commissioners as presented.

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

BOC - LITTER SWEEP PROCLAMATION

The Board of Commissioners was requested to approve a proclamation to encourage residents, businesses, civic organizations, and government agencies to participate in roadside litter cleanup efforts.

Motion: To approve Proclamation No. 2025-10 as presented.

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

Proclamation No. 2025-10 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

SPRING INTO ACTION:
LITTER SWEEP PARTICIPATION 2025

WHEREAS, the natural beauty and high quality of life in Burke County are treasured assets that must be preserved through proactive environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, litter along Burke County's roadsides poses a significant environmental concern, harming wildlife, polluting waterways, and diminishing the scenic appeal of our communities; and

WHEREAS, the Lake James Environmental Association hosts an annual litter cleanup event for Lake James, which took place on March 15, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Burke County Chamber of Commerce organizes an annual Litter Sweep—a countywide initiative where residents work together to remove roadside litter and beautify our community, which is scheduled to take place from April 2 to April 9; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) conducts a biannual Litter Sweep, a statewide initiative that encourages residents, businesses, civic groups, and government agencies to join in the effort to clean up roadside litter, which will be held from April 12 to April 26, with a Fall Litter Sweep scheduled for September; and

WHEREAS, volunteers participating in these efforts will be provided with cleanup supplies, including gloves, safety vests, and trash bags, to support their work in removing litter from public roadways and shared community spaces; and

WHEREAS, participation in litter sweep events helps preserve Burke County's natural beauty for future generations and ensures that "Nature's Playground" remains clean, welcoming, and enjoyable for all; and

WHEREAS, Burke County's Community Beautification Initiative reflects the county's dedication to maintaining clean and welcoming public spaces, strengthening community pride, and supporting economic growth; and

WHEREAS, the Burke County Board of Commissioners encourages all citizens to participate in the many litter cleanup events organized by various organizations throughout the year and to support ongoing efforts that promote a cleaner and more vibrant community;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Burke County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim the month of April 2025 as LITTER SWEEP PARTICIPATION MONTH in Burke County and urges all residents, businesses, and community organizations to join in this important initiative to help maintain the cleanliness, beauty, and livability of our roadsides and neighborhoods.

Approved this 21st day of April 2025.

/s/: Jeffrey C. Brittain

Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman

Burke County Board of Commissioners

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 11 - \$13,329

Approval of Budget Amendment No. 11, in the amount of \$13,329, was requested. This amendment recognizes revenues and anticipated expenditures for Library State Aid Funding being distributed to counties in North Carolina.

Budgetary Effect: \$13,329 budget increase for State funds. The funding will be used toward program support.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 11 in the amount of \$13,329 as presented.

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Budget Amendment No. 11 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 11 FY 24-25

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 11			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-55500-01-433493	LIBRARY STATE AID GRANT	\$13,329	
EXPENSES			
100-55500-25-559001	STATE AIDE EXP- NONRECURRING	\$13,329	

To recognize Additional State Aid Library funds (Nonrecurring) being distributed to Counties for the expense of those funds.

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.

Adopted this 21st day of April 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 NO. 12 - \$10,928

Approval of Budget Amendment No. 12, in the amount of \$10,928, was requested. This amendment recognizes Senior Center grant funding for meals from disaster recovery funds being distributed to counties in North Carolina. The amendment also covers Senior Center donations received to be used for an anniversary event.

Budgetary Effect: \$10,928 budget increase for meals for Seniors and funds to be used for an anniversary event.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 12 in the amount of \$10,928 as presented.

RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Budget Amendment No. 12 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 12

FY 24-25

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 12			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-54502-06-436500	CONTRIBUTIONS/DONATIONS	\$5,000	
100-54500-06-436500	CONTRIBUTIONS/DONATIONS	\$5,928	
EXPENSES			
100-54502-20-562600	GRANT FUNDS	\$5,000	
100-54501-20-562600	FOOD	\$1,000	
100-54501-20-561500	PROGRAM SUPPLIES	\$1,000	

100-54500-20-562600	FOOD	\$2,000	
100-54500-20-561500	PROGRAM SUPPLIES	\$1,928	
Purpose: To recognize the Senior Center grant funding for meals from disaster recovery funds being distributed to counties in North Carolina. The amendment also covers Senior Center donations received to be used for an anniversary event.			
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.			

Adopted this 21st day of April 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 NO. 13 - \$25,407

Approval of the following budget amendment (No. 13), which recognizes funds received from ZRO DELTA to be passed through to the Department of Commerce, was requested.

Budgetary Effect: \$25,407 increase.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 13 in the amount of \$25,407 as presented.

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

Budget Amendment No. 13 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 13
 FY 24-25

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 13			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-65044-00-438000	ZRO DELTA REIMBURSEMENT	\$25,407	
EXPENSES			
100-65044-40-554001	NC DEPT OF COMMERCE REPAYMENT	\$25,407	
To recognize funds received by Burke County for the expense of those funds.			

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.
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Adopted this 21st day of April 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 NO. 14 - \$162,800

Approval of Budget Amendment No. 14, in the amount of \$162,800, was requested. This amendment recognizes the Stream Bank Restoration Grant from NCDEQ for work along Silver Creek.

Budgetary Effect: \$162,800 budget increase.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 14 in the amount of \$162,800 as presented.

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

Budget Amendment No. 14 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 14
 FY 24-25

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 14			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-61000-01-433491	GRANT FUNDS	\$162,800	
EXPENSES			
100-61000-35-533404	DEBRIS REMOVAL	\$162,800	
To recognize funds received by Burke County for the expense of those funds.			
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.			

Adopted this 21st day of April 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 NO. 15 - \$1,321,926

This was a request to approve Budget Amendment No. 15 in the amount of \$1,321,926, which recognizes a transfer of ARPA expended funds and closure of a special revenue fund.

Budgetary Effect: \$1,321,926 to transfer funds already appropriated and to close out a special revenue fund.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 15 in the amount of \$1,321,926 as presented.

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

Budget Amendment No. 15 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 15
 FY 2024-2025

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 15			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-00000-11-439181	TRANSFER FROM ARP FUND	\$1,000,000	
181-18100-01-439999	AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN REVENUE	\$321,926	
410-00000-11-439100	TRANSFER FROM GENERAL FUND 410	\$1,000,000	
EXPENSES			
100-59000-55-595410	TRANSFER TO CAPITAL RESERVE	\$1,000,000	
181-18101-00-569100	ARP HEALTH CATEGORY	\$321,926	
410-00000-05-599999	PROJECT RESERVE SET ASIDES	\$1,000,000	
Purpose: To recognize a transfer of ARPA expended funds and closure of a special revenue fund.			

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.

Adopted this 21st day of April 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 NO. 16 - \$850,000

This was a request to approve Budget Amendment No. 16 in the amount of \$850,000, which recognizes transferring earmarked funds for Western Piedmont Community College for the purpose of future capital needs. This amendment will also establish a separate capital fund dedicated to WPCC.

Budgetary Effect: \$850,000 to transfer funds already appropriated and to create a capital project fund.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 16 for \$850,000 as presented.

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

Budget Amendment No. 16 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 16
 FY 2024-2025

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 16			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
221-58500-11-439100	WPCC CAPITAL FUND	\$850,000	
EXPENSES			
100-58500-30-590050	WPCC CAPITAL		\$850,000
100-59000-55-595221	TRANSFER TO WPCC FUND	\$850,000	
221-58500-30-599999	BUDGET SET ASIDE	\$850,000	

Purpose: To recognize transferring earmarked funds for Western Piedmont Community College for future capital needs. This amendment will also establish a separate capital fund dedicated to WPCC.

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.

Adopted this 21st day of April 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 NO. 17 - \$9,041,700

This was a request to approve the following budget amendment (No. 17) for \$9,041,700, to recognize FEMA funding awarded to impacted counties in North Carolina from Hurricane Helene damages and relief efforts.

Budgetary Effect: \$9,041,700 increase.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 17 for \$9,041,700 as presented.

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

Budget Amendment No. 17 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 17
 FY 2024-2025

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 17			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
214-21401-01-433100	FEMA REIMBURSEMENT	\$8,000,000	
214-21402-01-433100	FEMA REIMBURSEMENT	\$600,000	
214-21403-01-433100	FEMA REIMBURSEMENT	\$6,000	
214-21403-00-438045	INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT	\$15,700	
214-21404-00-438045	FEMA REIMBURSEMENT	\$6,000	
214-21404-00-438045	INSURANCE REIMBURSEMENT	\$14,000	
214-21499-01-433100	FEMA REIMBURSEMENT	\$400,000	

EXPENSES			
214-21401-05-532050	STORM DEBRIS REMOVAL	\$6,500,000	
214-21401-05-559000	REMOVAL MONITORING	\$1,500,000	
214-21402-05-510100	SALARIES/BENEFITS	\$575,000	
214-21402-05-561500	OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE	\$25,000	
214-21403-10-543000	TOWER REPAIR	\$21,700	
214-21404-25-542500	PARK REPAIR	\$20,000	
214-21499-05-559000	ADMIN EXPENSE	\$400,000	
Purpose: to recognize FEMA funding awarded to impacted counties in North Carolina from Hurricane Helene damages and relief efforts.			
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.			

Adopted this 21st day of April 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 NO. 18 - \$550,000

This was a request to approve the following budget amendment (No. 18), which recognizes occupancy tax received over the original budgeted amount. These funds will be passed through to the TDA.

Budgetary Effect: \$550,000 to pass through funds to Burke County TDA.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 18 for \$550,000 as presented.

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

Budget Amendment No. 18 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 18
 FY 24-25

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 18
REVENUES AND EXPENSES

<u>ACCOUNT NUMBER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>DECREASE</u>
REVENUES			
100-65018-07-431401	OCCUPANCY TAX REVENUE	\$550,000	
EXPENSES			
100-65018-40-559000	BCTDA PAYMENT	\$550,000	
Purpose: To recognize occupancy tax received over the original budgeted amount. These funds will be passed through to the TDA.			
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.			

Adopted this 21st day of April 2025.

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

Attest:

/s/: Kay Honeycutt Draughn
 Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 19 - \$25,000

This was a request to approve Budget Amendment No. 19 for \$25,000, recognizing grant funds received from NCDOT to be passed through to the Salem Fire & Rescue as reimbursement for a paving project.

Budgetary Effect: \$25,000 increase.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 19 for \$25,000 as presented.

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

Budget Amendment No. 19 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 19 FY 24-25

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 19			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
<u>ACCOUNT NUMBER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>DECREASE</u>
REVENUES			
100-00000-01-433101	NCDOT GRANT	\$25,000	

EXPENSES			
100-47500-10-586000	SALEM FIRE	\$25,000	
Purpose: To recognize grant funds received from NCDOT to be passed through to the Salem Fire & Rescue as reimbursement for a paving project.			
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.			

Adopted this 21st day of April 2025.

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

Attest:
/s/: Kay Honeycutt Draughn
 Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 20 - \$60,000

This was a request to approve the following budget amendment (No. 20) for \$60,000, which recognizes grant funds received from ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) to be used to facilitate Hurricane Helene recovery efforts.

Budgetary Effect: \$60,000 increase.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 20 for \$60,000 as presented.

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

Budget Amendment No. 20 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 20 FY 24-25

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 20			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
100-46200-06-436500	ANIMAL SERVICES DONATIONS	\$60,000	
EXPENSES			
100-46200-10-532030	MEDICAL SERVICES	\$23,500	
100-46200-10-543020	M/R VEHICLES	\$3,500	
100-46200-10-562001	DRUGS	\$17,000	
100-46200-10-561500	PROGRAM SUPPLIES	\$16,000	

Purpose: To recognize grant funds received from ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) to be used to facilitate Hurricane Helene recovery efforts.

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.

Adopted this 21st day of April 2025.

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

Attest:

/s/: Kay Honeycutt Draughn
 Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 21 - \$30,000

Note: This item was removed during the approval of the agenda.

RESULT: REMOVED.

CM - APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 22 - \$283,542

This was a request to approve the following budget amendment (No. 22) for \$283,542, which recognizes the release of State Capital Infrastructure Funds during the 2022 - 2023 fiscal year.

Budgetary Effect: \$283,542 increase to the overall budget for interest income recognized. This budgetary effect will also allow funds to be moved to appropriate accounts for the closing of the capital project.

Motion: To adopt Budget Amendment No. 22 for \$283,542 as presented.

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

Budget Amendment No. 22 reads as follows:

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 22
 FY 24-25

BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 22			
REVENUES AND EXPENSES			
ACCOUNT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	INCREASE	DECREASE
REVENUES			
215-21511-00-436100	INTEREST INCOME	\$283,542	
EXPENSES			

215-21511-00-572100	BCDCF RENOVATIONS		\$3,220,000
215-21511-00-590100	STATE REPAYMENT	\$3,503,542	
Purpose: To recognize the release of State Capital Infrastructure Funds during the 2022 - 2023 fiscal year.			
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.			

Adopted this 21st day of April 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 - APPOINTMENTS TO JCPC SEATS NO. 4 & 19

The appointment of Kaylee Wohlenhaus to replace Ally Mashburn (District Attorney or Designee) on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Court (JCPC) was requested to complete the remainder of a term ending June 30, 2026.

4	D. Attorney or Designee	Ally Mashburn	A	6/21/2022
			R	6/18/2024
			TE	6/30/2026
19	Parks & Rec	Vacant	A	
			TE	6/30/2026

The appointment of Burke Co. Parks & Recreation team member, Wesley Hasson, is requested to fill vacant JCPC Seat No. 19, representing parks and recreation, to complete an unexpired term ending June 30, 2026.

Motion: To remove Ally Mashburn's name from the official roster for the JCPC and thank her for her service to the community. To appoint Kaylee Wohlenhaus to Seat No. 4 on the JCPC representing the District Attorney's office to complete the remainder of a term ending June 30, 2026. To appoint Wesley Hasson to Seat No. 19 on the JCPC representing Parks & Recreation to complete the remainder of a term ending June 30, 2026.

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

CLERK - REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE AMERICA 250 NC COMMITTEE

The terms of appointment for the following members of the America 250 NC Committee ended

on April 15th: Commissioner Smith, Dr. Linda Lindsey, Ed Phillips, Dr. Patricia Wells, and Dr. Joel Welch. With the exception of Dr. Wells, all members wish to be reappointed. The new terms will be for three (3) years, except for Commissioner Smith's, which will be a 1-year term ending on December 15, 2025. An application is expected from Dr. Sylvia Medford, a native of Burke County and the 2025 - 2027 Regent, Quaker Meadows Chapter, NSDAR.

Motion: To remove Dr. Patricia Wells from the official roster for the America 250th Planning Committee and thank her for her service. To reappoint Commissioner Smith (Seat No. 1, County Commissioner) to the America 250th Planning Committee for a 1-year term ending December 15, 2025. To reappoint Dr. Linda Lindsey (Seat No. 4, Rev. War Days), Ed Phillips (Seat No. 7, TDA), and Dr. Joel Welch (Seat No. 13, WPCC) to the America 250th Planning Committee for 3-year terms ending April 15, 2028.

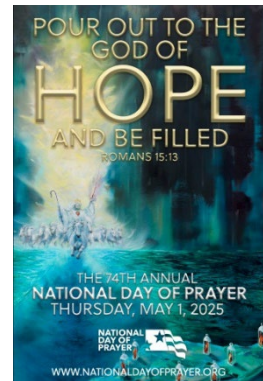
RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

CM - PROCLAMATION DECLARING MAY 1, 2025, AS NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

The National Day of Prayer tradition predates the founding of the United States of America, evidenced by the Continental Congress' proclamation in 1775 setting aside a day of prayer. In 1952, Congress established an annual day of prayer, and in 1968, that law was amended, designating the National Day of Prayer as the first Thursday in May.



Though the National Day of Prayer focuses most of its efforts on promoting the annual day of prayer, we realize that true life-altering, world-changing prayer cannot happen in a single day. It must become a discipline. The theme for the 2025 National Day of Prayer is "Pour out to the God of hope and be filled." The Board is requested to approve the following proclamation.

Motion: To approve Proclamation No. 2025-07.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Proclamation No. 2025-07 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

PROCLAMATION
NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2025

WHEREAS, civic prayers and national days of prayer have a long and venerable history in our constitutional republic dating back to the First Continental Congress in 1775; and,

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence, our first statement as Americans of national purpose

and identity, made “the Laws of Nature and Nature’s God” the foundation of our United States of America and asserted that people have inalienable rights that are God-given; and,

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court has affirmed the right of state legislatures to open their sessions with prayer, and the Supreme Court and the United States Congress themselves begin each day with prayer, and,

WHEREAS, in 1988, legislation setting aside the first Thursday in May in each year as a National Day of Prayer was passed unanimously by both Houses of Congress and signed by President Ronald Reagan; and,

WHEREAS, the National Day of Prayer is an opportunity for Americans of all faiths to join in united prayer to acknowledge our dependence on God, to give thanks for blessings received, to request healing for wounds endured, and to ask God to guide our leaders and bring wholeness to the United States and her citizens; and,

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to give thanks to God by observing a day of prayer in Burke County when all may acknowledge our blessings and express gratitude for them while recognizing the need for strengthening religious and moral values in our state and nation; and,

WHEREAS, this year’s theme is “Pour out to the God of hope and be filled.”

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the County Commissioners for Burke County, North Carolina, do hereby proclaim Thursday, May 1, 2025, to be designated as “A Day of Prayer in Burke County” and encourage the citizens of Burke County to observe the day in ways appropriate to its importance and significance.

Approved this 21st day of April 2025.

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

FINANCE - LEASE FOR ADULT CORRECTIONS

The lease for the NC Department of Adult Corrections Office for District 25 is set to expire on March 31, 2025. This request is to renew the lease at the same location in the Courthouse Annex for an additional 12-month term, to expire on March 31, 2026. This lease extension is exempt from the 30-day notice requirements of N.C.G.S. § 160A-272.

Budgetary Effect: The cost of the lease is \$1.00.

Motion: To authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a lease with the State of North Carolina, subject to review and / or revision by the County Attorney.

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

FM - REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF A WRITTEN AGREEMENT BETWEEN HOME TRUST

BANK AND LONGTOWN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Longtown Volunteer Fire Department is entering into an agreement with Home Trust Bank for the construction of an addition to its building located at 7765 South Mountain Institute Road in Nebo.

The Board of Directors of the fire department believes the department is fiscally responsible and financially able to construct the addition to their building and respectfully requests the Burke County Board of Commissioners to endorse the verification documents from Home Trust Bank pertaining to the loan agreement. The endorsement would not in any way constitute a financial obligation to the County of Burke.

Budgetary Effect: None.

Motion: To support Longtown Volunteer Fire Department's efforts to construct the addition to their building and endorse the verification documents for the purchase and financing of the facility through Home Trust Bank.

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

GA - PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING APRIL 2025 AS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

The Burke County Board of Commissioners was requested to approve a proclamation designating April 2025 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Burke County, North Carolina. This proclamation highlights the county's commitment to ensuring the well-being of all children and recognizing the critical role that families, schools, and communities play in fostering safe, stable, and nurturing environments.

Child abuse and neglect remain pressing public health concerns that have long-term negative effects on children, families, and future generations. Research shows that children who grow up in families with access to economic, health, educational, and social support are less likely to experience maltreatment. Addressing this issue requires a collaborative effort among families, child welfare professionals, healthcare providers, law enforcement, schools, faith-based organizations, businesses, and government entities at all levels.

The proclamation urges all Burke County residents to take part in efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect by supporting families and strengthening community partnerships. By recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, Burke County reaffirms its dedication to creating a safer and healthier future.

Motion: To approve Proclamation No. 2025-09.

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

Proclamation No. 2025-09 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

PROCLAMATION
CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH
APRIL 2025

WHEREAS, children's healthy development and well-being is a priority for our county, and children need safe, stable, and nurturing families, schools, and communities; and

WHEREAS, childhood trauma, including abuse and neglect, is a serious problem affecting communities across our state and has long-term negative effects on children, families, and future generations; and

WHEREAS, children who live in families with access to economic, health, educational, and social supports are less likely to experience abuse and neglect; and

WHEREAS, nurturing positive, healthy childhoods and preventing child maltreatment requires action by all Burke County residents and is achieved through partnerships built among families, prevention advocates, child welfare professionals, schools, health care providers, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, law enforcement agencies, and local, state, and national governments; and

WHEREAS, in order to solve the public health issue of abuse and neglect, we must work together to ensure all children and families are healthy and thriving, and invest more in effective child abuse prevention initiatives and family-strengthening policies and supports.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Burke County Board of Commissioners do hereby proclaim April 2025 as "CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH" in Burke County, North Carolina, and commend its observance to all citizens.

Approved this 21st day of April 2025.

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

HEALTH - NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK PROCLAMATION

This was a request to approve a proclamation declaring April 7 - 13, 2025, as National Public Health Week. The theme for 2025 is "It Starts Here."

Motion: To approve Proclamation No. 2025-08.

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

Proclamation No. 2025-08 reads as follows:

BURKE COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the week of April 7, 2025, is National Public Health Week, and the theme is "It Starts Here," highlighting the importance of making a difference in our home, community and state; and

WHEREAS, this year is the 30th anniversary of celebrating National Public Health Week, and in the past 30 years, significant strides have been made in public health, including the following public health successes:

- (1) deaths due to HIV / AIDS, which peaked in 1994 at 49,095 AIDS-related deaths that year in the U.S., have dropped significantly with Antiretroviral therapy ensuring most people with HIV can live normal lifespans and prevention tools like PrEP significantly reduce transmission; and
- (2) smoking rates, which were as high as 25.5% among U.S. adults in 1994, have now fallen to 11.4% due to comprehensive smoke-free policies, public awareness campaigns, and taxation of tobacco products; and
- (3) childhood mortality, which was at a rate of 13.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1994, has now fallen to 5.4 deaths per 1,000 live births due to vaccines, better healthcare access and nutrition; and
- (4) mental health awareness and treatment, with 40% of people with mental health conditions being untreated in 1994, has progressed with increased awareness, parity laws and integration into primary care, which have expanded access to mental health services and reduced treatment gaps; and
- (5) lead poisoning, with 4.4% of U.S. children having elevated blood lead levels in 1994, has now fallen to less than 0.5% due to policies banning leaded gasoline and reducing lead in paint, pipes, and water systems; and

WHEREAS, public health organizations use National Public Health Week to educate public policymakers, public health professionals and the public on issues that are important to improving the health of the people of the United States;

WHEREAS, public health professionals help communities prevent, prepare for, withstand and recover from the impact of a full range of health threats, ranging from infectious disease outbreaks to natural disaster preparedness; and

WHEREAS, efforts to adequately support public health and the prevention of disease and injury can continue to transform a health system focused on treating illness into a health system focused on preventing disease and injury and promoting wellness.

WHEREAS, Burke County Public Health was awarded the 2024 Dr. Sarah Morrow Health Department of the Year award; and

WHEREAS, WIC was awarded the Breastfeeding Award of Excellence Gold Award.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Burke County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim the week of April 7 - 13, 2025, as National Public Health Week in Burke County and call upon the people of

Burke County to observe this week by helping our families, friends, neighbors, co-workers and leaders to recognize the contribution of public health in ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their best possible health, as the theme states, "It Starts Here."

Approved this 21st day of April 2025.

/s/: Jeffrey C. Brittain

Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman

Burke County Board of Commissioners

TAX DEPT. - TAX COLLECTION REPORT - MARCH 2025

The Board of Commissioners was presented with the Tax Collection Report for the period between July 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, at the pre-agenda meeting as follows:

Category	Amount Collected YTD	% Collected	Balance to Collect
Property Tax	\$53,548,941.77	97.43%	\$1,244,237.23
Motor Vehicle Tax	\$4,296,572.26	86.64%	\$779,671.74
Current Year Taxes	\$57,845,514.03	96.62%	\$2,023,908.97
Delinquent Taxes	\$500,201.73	71.46%	\$199,798.27
Penalty & Interest	\$318,931.22	96.94%	\$10,068.78

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	\$55,264,117.08	\$53,548,941.77	96.60%	\$1,715,175.31

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

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

TAX DEPT. - RELEASE REFUND REPORT - MARCH 2025

Releases in value and/or refunds of taxes typically occur when:

- Taxpayers submit information that creates a reduction in value.
- Situs is corrected between counties and/or municipalities.
- Valuation appeals reduce the value of real or personal property.
- The postmark reveals that a payment was submitted timely.

The Board of Commissioners was presented with the results from the tax release and refund report for the period ending March 31, 2025, as follows.

Tax System Refunds and Releases			
Report Amount	Rebilled Amount	Net Release	Refund Amount
\$6,223.51	\$3,042.65	\$3,180.86	\$0.00

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							
0024070673-2023-2023-0000-00-REG	CARSWELL, ODIS TED	7/3/2023	KAYLA BURGESS	3/14/2025	17.09	14.01	3.08
0024070673-2023-2023-0000-00-REG	CARSWELL, ODIS TED	7/3/2023	KAYLA BURGESS	3/14/2025	0.00	3.08	-3.08
0024070673-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	CARSWELL, ODIS TED	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	3/14/2025	17.09	14.01	3.08
0024070673-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	CARSWELL, ODIS TED	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	3/14/2025	0.00	3.08	-3.08
Subtotal					34.18	34.18	0.00
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Adjustment Release							
0024070673-2023-2023-0000-00-REG	CARSWELL, ODIS TED	7/3/2023	KAYLA BURGESS	3/14/2025	3.08	3.08	0.00
0024070673-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	CARSWELL, ODIS TED	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	3/14/2025	3.08	3.08	0.00
Subtotal					6.16	6.16	0.00
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Duplicate Billing							
0024021049-2024-2024-0000-01-REG	HUFFMAN, CHRISTOPHER JUDD	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	3/20/2025	175.16	175.16	0.00
0024045902-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	TONEY, JOHN ROBERT JR	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	2/28/2025	152.34	4.62	147.72
0024064681-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	PITTMAN, EARL R	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	3/20/2025	108.98	103.38	5.60
0024077197-2024-2023-0000-00-REG	KENNEDY, JEFFREY L	6/11/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	3/4/2025	10.08	10.08	0.00
0024077197-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	KENNEDY, JEFFREY L	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	3/4/2025	9.24	9.24	0.00
0024077499-2024-2024-0000-01-REG	DAVIS, GREG A	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	3/3/2025	150.61	150.61	0.00
Subtotal					606.41	453.09	153.32
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Exempt Property							
0000024786-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	DROWNING CREEK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC.	7/15/2024	AMANDA CONLEY	3/25/2025	902.26	902.26	0.00
Subtotal					902.26	902.26	0.00
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Not in Burke County							
0024059609-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	MERRILL, ROBERT B	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	3/13/2025	175.56	175.56	0.00
0024077687-2024-2024-0000-01-REG	EDWARDS, DAVID WAYNE	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	3/4/2025	109.19	109.19	0.00
Subtotal					284.75	284.75	0.00
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Process Correction							
0000053885-2023-2023-0001-00-REG	MILLER, ALVIN R	9/6/2023	LINDA WILBUR	3/24/2025	164.57	164.57	0.00
Subtotal					164.57	164.57	0.00
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Release LFUF							
0000026340-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	RUTHERFORD, CLARA B	7/15/2024	JOHN BRIDGERS	3/21/2025	257.12	88.00	169.12
0000028430-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	GANTT, VICKI WHITENER	7/15/2024	AMANDA CONLEY	3/28/2025	726.85	88.00	638.85
0000036205-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	PRAISE ASSEMBLY OF GOD	7/15/2024	AMANDA CONLEY	3/24/2025	88.00	88.00	0.00
0000073206-2019-2019-0000-00-REG	REIMERS, DEAN	7/1/2019	LINDA WILBUR	3/7/2025	105.29	72.00	33.29
0000073206-2020-2020-0000-00-REG	REIMERS, DEAN	7/1/2020	LINDA WILBUR	3/7/2025	97.48	72.00	25.48
0000073206-2021-2021-0000-00-REG	REIMERS, DEAN	7/1/2021	LINDA WILBUR	3/7/2025	101.48	76.00	25.48
0000073206-2022-2022-0000-00-REG	REIMERS, DEAN	7/1/2022	LINDA WILBUR	3/7/2025	107.48	82.00	25.48
0000073206-2023-2023-0000-00-REG	REIMERS, DEAN	7/3/2023	LINDA WILBUR	3/7/2025	99.52	88.00	11.52
0000073206-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	REIMERS, DEAN	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	3/7/2025	99.52	88.00	11.52
Subtotal					1,682.74	742.00	940.74
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Sold/Traded							
0000001804-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	WALKER, ROBERT D JR	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	3/6/2025	1,458.58	9.24	1,449.34
0000054010-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	GOSNELL, WAYNE A	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	3/7/2025	6.16	6.16	0.00
0024052272-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	ABERNATHY, BRITTANY NICOLE	7/15/2024	LOENDORF JOSEPH	3/12/2025	72.13	72.13	0.00
Subtotal					1,536.87	87.53	1,449.34
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Value Change							
0000007538-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	MATTHEWS, FRED MELTON	7/15/2024	AMANDA CONLEY	3/7/2025	1,005.57	506.32	499.25
Subtotal					1,005.57	506.32	499.25
Total					6,223.51	3,180.86	3,042.65

VTS Refunds Over \$100	
	Refund Amount
VTS Adjustments	\$540.60

Payee Name	Primary Owner	Address 3	Transaction #	Refund Reason	Create Date	Tax Juris.	Levy Type	Change	Interest Change	Total Change
COOK, WILLIAM SHAWN	COOK, WILLIAM SHAWN	CONNELLY SPG, NC 28612	223848690	SLVG or RBLT TTL	3/26/2025	01	TAX	(\$81.93)	\$0.00	(\$81.93)
						36	TAX	(\$19.89)	\$0.00	(\$19.89)
									Refund	\$101.82
CROTTS, MICHAEL DAVID	CROTTS, MICHAEL DAVID	VALDESE, NC 28690	446638592	Situs error	3/17/2025	01	TAX	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
						57	TAX	(\$342.76)	\$0.00	(\$342.76)
						57	VEHICLE FEE	(\$20.00)	\$0.00	(\$20.00)
						27	TAX	\$68.55	\$0.00	\$68.55
			Refund	\$294.21						
VELAZQUEZ, ARIEL	VELAZQUEZ, ARIEL	MORGANTON, NC 28655	223489732	Over Assessment	3/20/2025	01	TAX	(\$121.74)	\$0.00	(\$121.74)
						32	TAX	(\$22.83)	\$0.00	(\$22.83)
							Refund	\$144.57		
								Refund Total	\$540.60	

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

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

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

TAX DEPT. - ORDER TO ADVERTISE 2024 DELINQUENT REAL PROPERTY TAXES

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 105-369, the Tax Collector shall report to the governing board the total amount of unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year that are liens on real property.

Under this statute, the Board orders the Tax Collector to advertise these tax liens on all unpaid real property. Also, a notice must be sent to the owner of record. This notice shall be sent at least 30 days before the advertisement is to be published to the last known address. These notices state that the owner's name will be advertised if taxes are not paid in full by Monday, March 31, 2025. The Tax Office mailed these notices in February 2025.

Category	Tax Levy	Amount Collected YTD	% Collected	Balance to Collect
Property Tax	\$55,264,117.08	\$53,548,941.77	96.60%	\$1,715,175.31

Category	Amount Collected YTD	% Collected	Balance to Collect
Property Tax	\$53,548,941.77	97.43%	\$1,244,237.23
Motor Vehicle Tax	\$4,296,572.26	86.64%	\$779,671.74
Current Year Taxes	\$57,845,514.03	96.62%	\$2,023,908.97

Delinquent Taxes	\$500,201.73	71.46%	\$199,798.27
Penalty & Interest	\$318,931.22	96.94%	\$10,068.78

This Delinquent Tax Notice, which is required to be sent before advertising in the newspaper, also serves as the Debt Setoff (DSO) Notice for Burke County. The Debt Setoff Notice is featured on the front page and is further explained on the reverse side of the document. This notice gives taxpayers 30 days to pay their delinquent taxes and avoid Burke County intercepting their North Carolina Income Tax refund.

Motion: To approve the 2024 Order to Advertise Tax Liens.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

The Order to Collect reads as follows:

ORDER OF THE BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.C.G.S. § 105-369

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF BURKE

To: John Bridgers, Tax Administrator of Burke County

You are hereby authorized, empowered and commanded to advertise tax liens on real property for failure to pay 2024 property taxes. You shall advertise said liens by publishing each lien in the local newspaper having general circulation in Burke County. Advertisement of the liens shall be made on Saturday, April 26, 2025.

This order shall be full and sufficient authority to direct, require, and enable you to advertise said tax liens in accordance with North Carolina General Statute § 105-369.

Witness my hand and official seal, this the 21st day of April 2025.

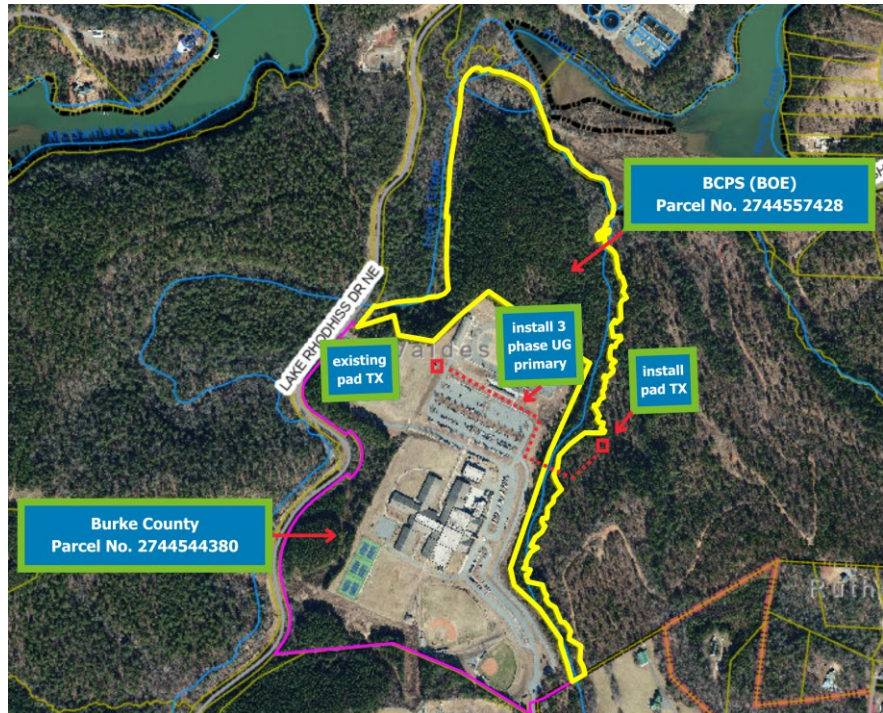
/s/: Jeffrey C. Brittain
Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman
Burke County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

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

DUKE - APPROVAL OF UTILITY EASEMENT AT DRAUGHN HIGH SCHOOL

Duke Energy requested a permanent easement to install an underground three-phase power line across Draughn High School. The line will run from the student parking lot toward the football stadium and connect to a transformer near the field house, providing power to a new development adjacent to the school. A portion of the easement affects land owned by the Burke County Public Schools (BCPS), and the remainder falls on the parcel deeded to Burke County. Therefore, Duke Energy requires easement agreements from both entities. The Board of Education approved its portion of the easement on April 8, 2025.



Motion: To approve the Deed of Easement between Burke County and Duke Energy as presented. Further, to authorize the Chairman to execute the easement on behalf of the Board, subject to review and / or revision by the County Attorney.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

ITEMS FOR DECISION

CLERK - APPOINTMENT TO THE BC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Kay Draughn, Clerk to the Board, stated that Seat No. 4 (At-Large) on the Library Board of Trustees was previously held by Mark Patrick until his recent resignation. According to his letter, he plans to move out of the state. Applications from Janice Gravely and Loch Hoffman are currently on file. The term for this seat runs through December 31, 2027.

4	At-Large	Mark Patrick	A	12/21/2021
		102 Mimosa Hills Drive	R	12/16/2024
		Morganton NC 28655	TE	12/31/2027

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Burns nominated Janice Gravely. There being no other nominations, Chairman Brittain closed the floor for nominations and called for a motion.

Motion: To remove Mark Patrick's name from the roster for the Burke Co. Library Board of Trustees, thank him for his service, and appoint Janice Gravely to Seat No. 4 (at-large) to complete the remainder of the term ending December 31, 2027.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Randy Burns, Commissioner

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

FINANCE - POLICY UPDATES FOR ARPA COMPLIANCE (PLACE HOLDER)

Note: This was removed during the approval of the agenda.

RESULT: REMOVED.

GS - AWARD CONTRACT FOR WATER METER PURCHASE & INSTALLATION

Mark Delehant, General Services Director, presented information on the County's comprehensive Water Meter Replacement Project, which involves installing approximately 2,241 cold-water metering devices in the County's water distribution system. The project is divided into two (2) phases: the procurement of over 2,000 water meters and the subsequent installation of these meters. The RFP to purchase the water meter units was posted on February 18, 2025, with a deadline of March 18, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. The County received four (4) proposals, of which Core & Main was the recommended firm for Phase I. The installation RFP was advertised for bids on February 21, 2025, with a deadline of April 4, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. The County received eight (8) bids, and RTS Water Solutions was the recommended firm for Phase II. Key highlights of Mr. Delehant's presentation included the following:



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BACKGROUND

Burke County has 3 separate systems totaling 103 miles of waterline.

Customer Count:

- Airport Rhodhiss – 220
- O'Mara – 35
- Burke South – 2,000

Water Meter Type:

- Manual Read
- AMR (Drive-By)
- ARI (Real-time data transmission to utility office)

Current Meter Status:

- Most residential meters use AMR
- Meters are 12–15 years old
- Reduced accuracy due to wear on internal components
- Battery failures are causing some meters to stop transmitting



METER PURCHASE BID RESULTS

Bid Opening March 18th

Company	Meter Brand	Bid Amount
Core & Main	Neptune T-10	\$576,110.50
RG3	RG3	\$582,853.12
Water Works	Hershey	\$646,883.92
Ferguson	Sensus	\$884,643.67



**WHAT DO
OTHER
LOCAL
WATER
PROVIDERS
USE?**

NAME	METER USED
Burke County	Neptune T-10 / Master Meter
Brentwood Water Corporation	Neptune T-10
Icard Water Corporation	Neptune T-10
Town of Rhodiss	Neptune T-10
City of Morganton	BADGER
Town of Long View	ZENNER
Town of Rutherford College	SENSUS
Town of Valdese	MULLER R-400
Town of Drexel	Master Meter

NEPTUNE T-10 FEATURES

- Neptune Meters are manufactured in Tallahassee, Alabama.
- Neptune Meters store a 96-day history usage and provide leak, backflow, and tampering alerts.
- Neptune Meters have the capability of providing flow reports that are helpful towards resolving customer disputes involving leaks.
- Neptune Meters have a 10-year full replacement warranty.

NEPTUNE E-CODER) R900I WARRANTY

Year of Failure	E-CODER)R900i Replacement Price Discount*
1-10	Full replacement: 100%
11	70%
12	70%
13	60%
14	60%
15	50%
16	45%
17	40%
18	35%
19	30%
20	25%



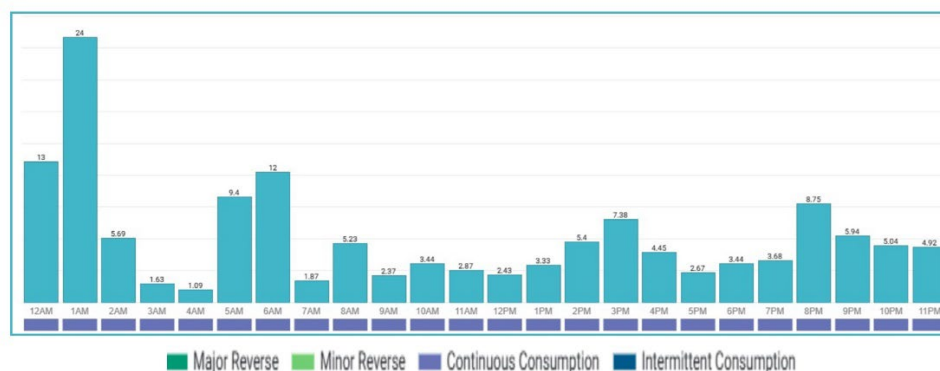
DATA LOGGING REPORT - HOURLY

May 15, 2024

MIU#: 1574306724

Size: 1 1/2" - 4" HPT

UOM: CUBIC METERS



METER INSTALLATION BID INFORMATION

Bid Opening April 4th

- Bids required a performance bond, payment bond, and proof of insurance.
- Bids include unit prices for meter install, meter setter replacement, meter box replacement, and replacement of PRVs (pressure reducing valves) as needed.
- Contract states 150 days to completion and includes a penalty of \$250 per day for failure to meet the completion date.



METER INSTALLATION BID RESULTS

Bid Opening April 4th

	Company	Location	Bid Amount
1	Envocore, LLC	GRAMBRILLS, MD	\$ 175,625.92
2	HST UTILITY SERVICE	SAINT PETERSBURG, FL	\$ 189,335.00
3	UTILITIES ONE	VOORHEES TOWNSHIP, NJ	\$ 191,518.00
4	VANGUARD UTILITY SERVICES INC	QOENSBORO, KY	\$ 224,924.12
5	PROFESSIONAL METERS INC	MORRIS, IL	\$ 235,644.96
6	CORE & MAIN LP	ASHEVILLE, NC	\$ 251,135.00
7	THE FORD DESIGN GROUP LLC	CLERMONT, FL	\$ 501,282.00
8	LOCK-LANE CONSTRUCTION	STONEY POINT, NC	\$ 548,200.00



ENVOCORE, LLC COMPANY BIO.

- Envocore Utility Service is based out of Gambrills, Maryland.
- They have installed over 1.3 million water meters since they started in 2003.
- Their bid submittal included over 50 water meter replacement projects spanning 19 states, including a recent project (3,500 meters) in Statesville, NC.
- Their installation process will provide the County with 24/7 access to progress through their work order management program which includes data and photo verification of each meter installed.





PROJECT FUNDING

- Total Project Cost = **\$751,736.42**
(meter purchase and installation)
- Project Funds Allotted = **\$1,318,567.00**
- Remaining balance available for W/S related needs = **\$566,830.58**

BURKE COUNTY

Note: RTS Water Solutions, the lowest responsive bidder, is a subsidiary of Envocore, LLC.

The certified architect's bid tabs are hereby incorporated into the meeting minutes by reference.

A summary of the water meter purchase bid tab is as follows:

Company	Location	Total Bid
RG3 Meter Company	Murphy, NC	\$581,765.52
Core & Main	Asheville, NC	\$606,179.50
Water Works Meteorology	Raleigh, NC	\$662,983.03
Ferguson Waterworks	Asheville, NC	\$877,984.52

A summary of the water meter installation bid tab is as follows:

Company	Total Bid	Bid Form Total
RTS Water Solutions	\$175,625.92	—
HST Utility Service, Inc.	\$189,335.00	\$191,518.00
Utilities One	\$193,728.00	—
Vanguard Utility Service	\$224,924.12	—
Professional Meters, Inc.	\$235,644.96	\$251,135.00
Core & Main LP	\$226,925.00	—
The Ford Design Group, LLC	\$501,282.00	—
Locke-Lane Construction	\$548,200.00	—

Mr. Delehant responded to several questions from the Board in regards to battery life and ROI. Additionally, County Manager Epley clarified that aging meters tend to slow down and underreport usage, which may contribute to the current 40–45% unaccounted-for water. The project aligns

with recommendations from Chuck Willis and the Asset & Inventory Assessment project team. Funding for the meter replacement was fully covered by state grants. There being no further questions, Chairman Brittain opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To award the contract to Core & Main for the purchase of approximately 2,000 water meters and the associated hardware in the amount of \$576,110.50, in addition to awarding the contract to RTS Water Solutions for water meter installation services in the amount of \$175,625.92. Further, authorize the County Manager to execute the contracts subject to review and / or revision by the County Attorney.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Randy Burns, Commissioner

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

SF&R - REPORT ON BUILDING EXPANSION & PURCHASE OF FIRE TRUCK & REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN FIRE TAX

Chief Autrey highlighted that Salem Fire and Rescue currently holds a split ISO (Insurance Services Office) fire rating of Class 5/9, with a Class 5 earned approximately 5–6 years ago and actively maintained since. He expressed the department's goal to lower the rating to a Class 4, noting that ISO scores—based on factors such as training, water capacity, and pumping ability—directly impact homeowners' insurance rates. Lowering the ISO rating is one of the few ways taxpayers can see a tangible financial benefit.

He emphasized the need for a new fire truck, stating that it is necessary regardless of the proposed tax rate increase. Without additional funding, the cost would have to come from cuts to other essential services. While the department has applied for all eligible grants and received a few—including one for a SCBA fill station recently installed—future grant prospects are uncertain due to the current federal funding climate. Chief Autrey concluded by stating the department has been financially prudent over the years and is now utilizing those savings to meet critical needs.

Additional information from the agenda packet:

At the pre-agenda meeting, Salem Fire & Rescue Protection Association, Inc. (SF&RPA) Chief Autrey presented an update on the fire station addition, the purchase of a fire truck and a request to increase the fire rate tax from .0716 to 0.1 for the SF&RPA district. The fire department's Board of Directors met on March 27, 2025, in open session and following an opportunity for public comment, they voted unanimously to request an increase in the tax rate.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Barrier inquired about the fire department's current financial position, initially recalling a figure of \$860,000. Chief Autrey clarified that they currently have \$550,000 in a CD, part of the original \$1.5 million in savings. They've spent about \$1 million and plan to use the remaining funds to pay down the building loan and as a down payment for a new truck.

Commissioner Barrier acknowledged the importance of fire, police, and EMS services but expressed concern about the taxpayer burden, especially with some constituents struggling to pay property taxes. He suggested exploring whether the department could cash flow the building payments to avoid further tax increases. He advised waiting until the upcoming 2027 county property revaluation as an opportunity to defer the tax burden on citizens while still ensuring that

first responders receive the resources they need to keep the community safe.

Chief Autrey responded by emphasizing that the \$1.5 million took over a decade to save and that inflation in building costs outpaced their savings efforts. The building cost rose from an estimated \$2 million to about \$4 million. He also explained that having money on hand has hurt their eligibility for some grants, as it appears they don't need financial assistance. The remaining funds are earmarked and not available for discretionary use.

Commissioner Stroud echoed Commissioner Barrier's appreciation for the fire department and commended Chief Autrey and his team for setting a high standard that other volunteer departments could follow. He expressed support for ensuring departments have the best resources possible, while also acknowledging the challenge of balancing that support with his and Commissioner Barrier's commitment to keeping taxes low — a key promise they were elected on.

Commissioner Stroud emphasized the difficulty commissioners face when setting tax rates, as helping one department can set a precedent for others. Still, he expressed a desire to be more engaged and aligned with fire department efforts moving forward, distinguishing his approach from past boards. He noted the department's low tax rate and past revenue-neutral shift as evidence of responsible management.

Chief Autrey added that their fire district's tax rate is nearly half that of some others, highlighting the value they've delivered. He also expressed support for collaborative approaches moving forward, such as group truck purchases or shared specifications, to improve efficiency and buying power across departments.

Vice Chairman Smith began by stating his strong stance on keeping taxes low; however, he emphasized that public safety is a top priority for him. He noted that he lives in Chief Autrey's district and that approving the request would mean voting to raise his own taxes. He shared feedback from people in the community, all of whom expressed strong trust in Chief Autrey's judgment and integrity.

Commissioner Burns, drawing from his background as a former volunteer firefighter and first responder team leader, expressed deep appreciation for the increasing demands and training required of today's fire service personnel. He acknowledged that current legislative proposals could negatively impact fire departments and the public and noted he has already brought one concerning bill to the NC Association of County Commissioners, urging a coordinated statewide response.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining a good ISO rating, noting its impact on homeowners' insurance, especially in rural areas like his own in George Hildebran. Burns recognized that fire departments must meet strict equipment standards to maintain those ratings, and while he is generally opposed to raising taxes, he understands the necessity when it comes to public safety.

Like other commissioners, he received strong community support for Chief Autrey's request. Commissioner Burns stated his full support and gratitude for the department's work and emphasized that public safety is the board's top priority. Looking forward, he encouraged ongoing collaboration between the county and all fire departments, referencing recent efforts where

county staff engaged fire chiefs to better understand their needs. He acknowledged that while this may have caused initial apprehension, it was done with the intent to support and plan for the future, and he hopes that openness will continue.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Brittain opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To direct the County Manager to include a .0284 cent increase in the fire tax rate for the Salem Fire & Rescue Protection Association, Inc. district in the proposed FY 25 - 26 budget. Further, to mandate that staff engage with fire service personnel across the county to discuss their long-term planning needs and gather input for future fire service development.

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

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

BOC - REPORTS & COMMENTS

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for reports and comments from Board members and professional staff. Commissioner Stroud cordially wished everyone a great week.

Commissioner Burns provided additional context regarding several pending state legislative bills that could significantly impact local emergency services and county governance. He explained that House Bill 675 would require all emergency medical technicians—from the intermediate level and above—to be registered with the National Registry, a major shift from the state’s current practices. He also expressed concern over House Bill 219, which would remove counties’ franchise rights for EMS and patient transport, potentially reducing local oversight and coordination. Additionally, he noted a provision in the state budget bill that would remove disaster management authority from North Carolina Emergency Management for the first 30 days of an event, effectively sidelining local emergency management during critical response periods. Commissioner Burns further referenced House Bill 365, which would limit or eliminate the zoning authority of local governments. He reported that the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners is already reviewing that bill. Commissioner Burns emphasized the importance of monitoring these developments closely and voiced his intent to advocate for local authority and public safety interests.

Vice Chairman Smith expressed his appreciation to Amy Kincaid, Guardian ad Litem, for attending the meeting and speaking about the foster care program and issues related to child abuse. He thanked them for their important work and acknowledged the value of their efforts in serving the community.

Commissioner Barrier thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to serve on the Opioid Settlement Coordinator interview team, noting it was a meaningful experience aligned with his passion for addressing the opioid crisis. He reported attending several meetings over the past month, including the Department of Social Services Board, the Library Board, Smart Start, and the Child Fatality Prevention Team. He expressed deep concern over the challenges facing children and staff within the DSS system, sharing that many children present with mental health issues that

create traumatic situations for both them and the staff. Commissioner Barrier extended his gratitude to all the teams involved in this work and affirmed his commitment to pushing for additional support and resources.

Clerk Draughn reported to the Board that Burke County Animal Services is currently at capacity with both dogs and cats. She encouraged anyone in the audience who could, to consider fostering a pet, even temporarily. She noted that all necessary supplies are provided to foster families and emphasized that doing so would significantly help by creating much-needed space at the facility.

Chairman Brittain shared information on upcoming meetings and invited youth groups to sign up to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at Commissioners' meetings. He also encouraged citizens to spay or neuter pets and to adopt or foster a pet from Animal Services. Chairman Brittain then issued friendly reminders to not litter, to pick up trash, and to cover your loads when transporting trash to the landfill or a convenience site.

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
- Partners Health Management's Human Rights Committee

RESULT: NO ACTION TAKEN.

CLOSED SESSION

RESULT: NOT NEEDED, NOT HELD.

ADJOURN

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Phil Smith, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Phil Smith, Brian Barrier, Randy Burns, and Mike Stroud

Approved this 18th day of August 2025.

Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:



Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board