

**MINUTES
BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PRE-AGENDA MEETING**

The Burke County Board of Commissioners held a pre-agenda meeting on Monday, May 5, 2025, at 3:00 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
Destin Hall, Wilson, Lackey, Rohr & Hall P.C.
Kat Wright, Deputy Clerk to the Board

STAFF ABSENT:

Margaret Pierce, Finance Director/Dep. Co. Mgr. (Vacation)
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board (Vacation)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brittain called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: To approve the agenda as amended, with the addition of the Tax Collection Report and the Tax Release Refund Report as Consent Items No. 11 and 12.

RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Brian Barrier, Commissioner

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

PRESENTATIONS**AM 250 - AMERICA'S 250 NC COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Ed Phillips, Chairman, America 250 Committee, gave a presentation on the upcoming America 250 celebration, which marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He shared that the America 250 NC Committee was formed in April of the previous year. The committee, made up of 15 members including local historians and Revolutionary War enthusiasts, meets on the second Monday of each month at the Burke Visitor Center. These meetings are open to the public, and community members are encouraged to attend and offer input.

Mr. Phillips reported that the committee has received two (2) grants from the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. The first grant, in the amount of \$10,000, was used to create and distribute "America 250 NC Burke County" banners, which are now displayed in downtown Morganton, downtown Valdese, Western Piedmont Community College, and at every public school in Burke County. The banners have sparked public interest and increased awareness of the America 250 effort.



The second grant, totaling \$30,000, will support the annual Revolutionary War Weekend in September, which has been held in the county for over 20 years. This year's event will be expanded significantly and will be held at the McDowell House. It will include period reenactor encampments, educational field trips for all Burke County fourth graders, and a unique ticketed tour on Friday, September 26, offering access to historic sites that are typically closed to the public. Mr. Phillips noted that additional events are in the works and updates will be provided as plans continue to develop.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. In response to a question from Commissioner Stroud, Mr. Phillips stated that merchandise for the America 250 celebration is currently in the planning phase. With no further discussion, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

BCCOC - RECOGNITION OF WINNERS FROM THE CHAMBER'S SPRING LITTER SWEEP

Chamber President, Tonia Stephenson, presented the results of the Chamber's 4th annual Spring Litter Sweep event. This year's event saw 155 registered participants who collected 445 bags of trash and 21 bags of recyclables. Volunteers also recovered numerous large debris items, including 32 tires, a shopping cart, a recliner, a chair, a bed frame, a battery, various car parts, and other household debris.

The Board was asked to recognize the grand prize winners at the regular meeting:

- First Place: Burke River Trail Litter Gitters, led by Beth Heile
- Second Place: Mr. Gary Jennings (Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1116)
- Third Place: Foothills Conservancy of NC
- Recycling Champions: CoMMA Drama Volunteers, led by Jaime Money

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

LVLC - PROCLAMATION CELEBRATING LIONS CLUBS

AliceFaye Peugh, Long View Lions Club (LVLC), appeared before the Board to request approval of a proclamation honoring the Club's 75th anniversary. LVLC has served Long View and the surrounding communities since 1950, dedicating its efforts to numerous charitable causes. These include vision and hearing programs, supporting local charities, and playing a key role in the construction and fundraising for the Long View Recreation Center.

Ms. Peugh highlighted the LVLC's instrumental role in launching the Unifour Children's Site and Senior Site Family Program, which serves Catawba, Alexander, Burke, and Caldwell counties. Through generous community sponsorships and contributions, the Club was able to purchase a new vision van and equipment to provide free vision screenings for children. This program, which began in the third quarter of 2022, aligns with the goals of North Carolina Lions, Inc. and the Kids Sight USA program.

Additional service projects carried out by the Club include street cleanups, food packing for the Corner Table Backpack Program, and collecting over 6,000 pounds of plastic for NexTrex, resulting in the placement of six (6) community benches. Ms. Peugh requested approval of a proclamation that recognizes the LGLC's 75 years of service and celebrates the impact of volunteerism and community service.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMM. DEV. - ZONING MAP AMENDMENT (ZMA 2025-03) & PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:00 P.M.

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

Rezoning Request:	ZMA 2025-03
Applicants:	Brian and Robin Smith
PIN:	1781-72-0579
Address:	2218 Geneva Drive, Morganton, NC
Request:	Rezone a 4.51-acre portion of a 23.14-acre parcel from Residential-Three (R-3) to Rural Mixed-Use (R-MU)

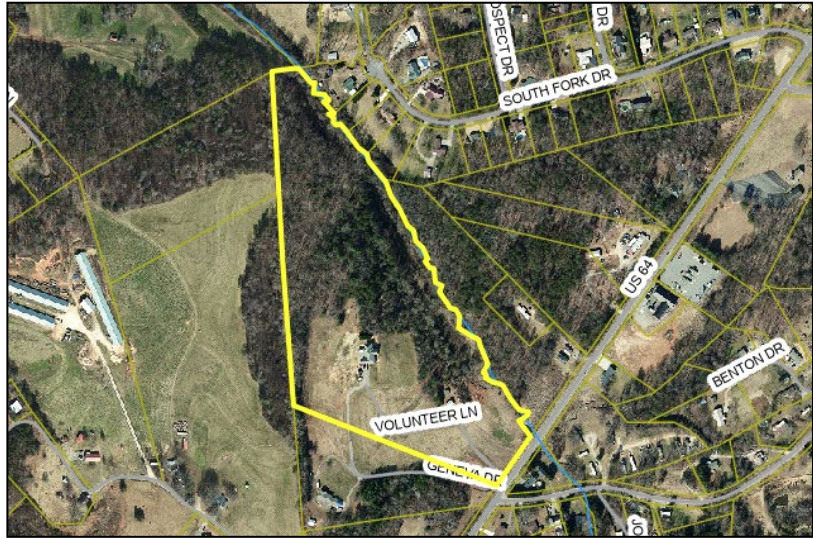
REQUEST

The Community Development Department has received a rezoning application from Brian and Robin Smith to rezone a 4.51-acre portion of a 23.14-acre parcel from Residential-Three (R-3) to Rural Mixed-Use (R-MU). The site has frontage on US 64, and this will be the access for the 4.51-acre portion of property, which is the subject of the rezoning request.

SITE ANALYSIS AND SURROUNDING AREA

The parcel has a PIN of 1781-72-0579 and is located within the Morganton Township and the Salem Fire District of Burke County. The parcel is not located in a watershed area.

Brian Smith, a custom home builder with over 30 years of experience, constructed an outbuilding on the property in 2022 with approval from the Board of Adjustment. He would like to use this structure for additional activity, which is an outgrowth of his construction business. Mr. Smith will restore and repair construction equipment commonly used in the trade, such as excavators, trucks, etc. Although he does not plan to have a "yard," he would like to sell some equipment there from time to time.



The county zoning in this area is mixed with Residential R-1, R-2, and R-3 adjacent to or across the road. To the north, nearby properties are zoned Light Industrial (L-I) and General Business (G-B). To the south and west, the area transitions into Rural Mixed-Use (R-MU) zoning. The R-MU district accommodates a blend of residential and commercial activities, with specific standards and buffers between residential and non-residential uses.

Existing Zoning and Land Uses within the Surrounding Area		
	Current Zoning	Existing Land Uses
North	R-3	Large lot housing
South	R-3	Residential
East	R-2	Residential
West	R-3	Large lot housing

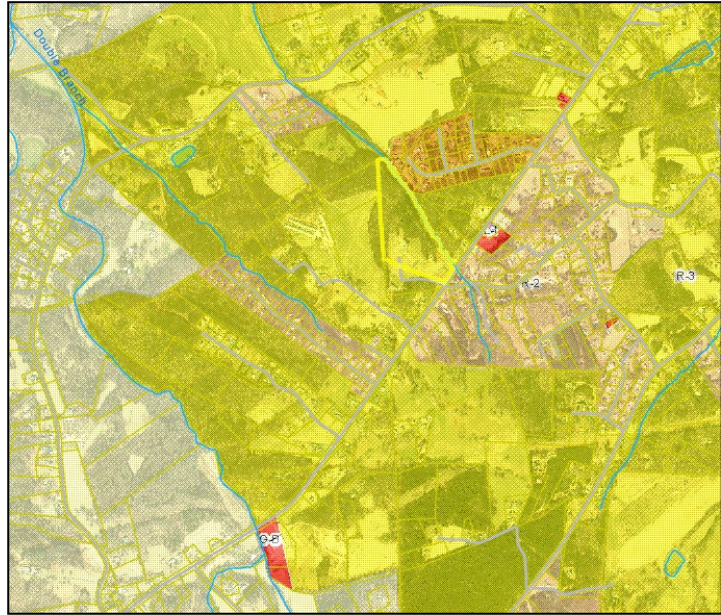
CURRENT ZONING

The current zoning for the parcel is R-3, but the area along US 64 has a large amount of residential uses and a regular amount of non-residential uses in the form of businesses, the County Convenience Site, and further to the south, the majority of the zoning is Rural Mixed-Use, which is a mix of residential and commercial uses. Staff believe the proposed rezoning is consistent with the historic pattern of commercial development along highway corridors in the County.

CONFORMITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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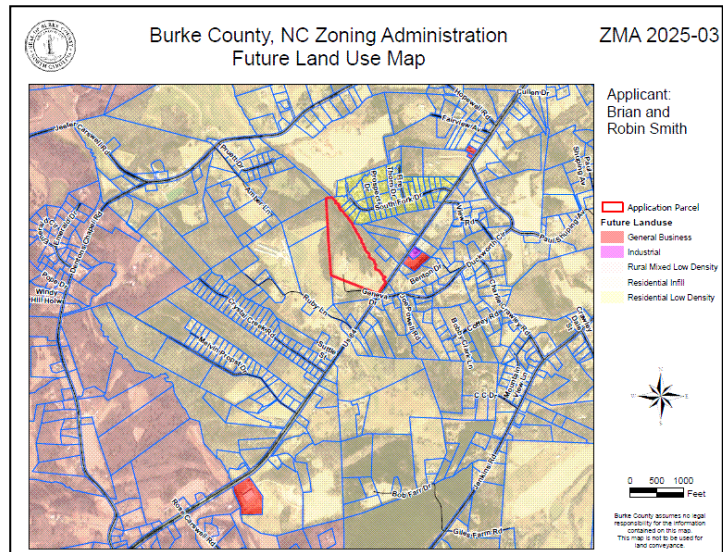
The current land use plan for Burke County is the 2022 - 2030 Blueprint Burke Strategic Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Map (see map below) puts the subject parcel in the Residential Infill land use category. As in many cases, the future land use map closely resembles the current zoning map. If the zoning is approved, the future land use map would be adjusted to Rural Mixed Low Density accordingly.



The Blueprint Burke Strategic Land Use Plan supports residential infill while also encouraging the development of local businesses, particularly along major transportation corridors like US 64. It is a usual occurrence in Burke County that you can expect a commercial enterprise on a state-maintained US highway. The mixed-use character of the surrounding area aligns with the proposed Rural Mixed-Use zoning.

THE BURKE CO. PLANNING BOARD'S RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Board provides a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners for each map amendment or text amendment. At the Planning Board meeting on March 27, 2025, the case was reviewed by the Board. One neighbor spoke in support of the zoning change. After a motion was made, the Board voted 6-0 to support the rezoning request.



Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

COMM. DEV. - ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT (ZTA 2025 - 01) & PUBLIC HEARING - 6:00 P.M.

Alan Glines, Planning Director / Deputy County Manager, presented highlights of the following zoning text amendment:

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT ZTA 2025-01

APPLICANT: Burke County Community Development

ORDINANCE TO BE AMENDED: Burke County Zoning Ordinance

REQUEST: Staff initiated an amendment to adjust the text of the Ordinance to remove extraneous graphics, streamline the site plan standards and requirements, and adjust the minimum building lot size.

SCOPE: In 2021, the Burke County Board of Commissioners approved a major update to the Zoning Ordinance. However, some aspects of that update were never fully implemented. Recently, staff began working to modernize the code and streamline its format. As part of this effort, staff are transitioning toward a Unified Development Code - a format commonly used by planning departments to consolidate all development regulations into a single, cohesive document. This approach helps eliminate redundancy and improve usability.

While the full transition will take time, this amendment marks an initial step in that direction. Additionally, the Board of Commissioners has made it a priority to support the development of more housing. To help meet this goal, staff are proposing several changes to lot size requirements, based on access to public water and sewer. Over the coming months, staff will present further recommendations to both the Planning Board and the Board of Commissioners for consideration.

The proposed changes focused on:

- Article 3 - Adjustments to lot sizes based on availability of public water and sewer.
- Article 5 - Consolidating requirements for special uses
- Article 6 - Clarification of development and design standards
- All sections and articles - simplification of graphics to remove unneeded components

STAFF COMMENTS: Staff is committed to keeping Burke County's ordinances current and responsive to the community's evolving needs. A planning code is a living document, intended to be updated as issues and opportunities are identified. In addition to presenting proposed text amendments to the Planning Board, staff evaluate each change in relation to the goals outlined in the Blueprint Burke Strategic Land Use Plan. This plan encourages updates to the zoning ordinance to ensure its continued relevance and specifically supports initiatives aimed at expanding housing opportunities in Burke County.

WESTERN PIEDMONT HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION: Staff presented the proposed changes to the residential lot sizes at the Western Piedmont Home Builders Association meeting and the membership was very supportive of the changes. They encouraged staff to continue this effort to modernize the code and to keep the group involved in the discussions.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Board reviewed the amendment at its meeting on March 27, 2025. No one from the public was present to speak on the matter, and when the motion was called, the Board voted 6-0 to support the changes.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Burns requested that Mr. Glines research House Bill 765 for the potential impact on local planning and zoning. Commissioner Barrier expressed his appreciation for the Community Development staff's efforts on the zoning text amendment and voiced his strong support for the proposed changes. He noted that improving zoning regulations was one of his priorities as a commissioner, with the goal of reducing government regulations, making processes easier for builders and citizens, and helping to address the ongoing housing crisis. There being no further discussion, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

CONSENT AGENDA

BCPS - PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL DATA FOR THE PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 2025

Keith Lawson, Finance Director, BCPS, in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement approved by the County and the Board of Education, presented the Board of Education's quarterly financial reports for the 2024 - 2025 budget year, showing the application of the County's local funding.

BCPS									
Local Financials by Purpose & Function Level									
2024/2025									
Expenses	'21/'22	'22/'23	'23/'24	'24/'25					
				Budget	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
Regular Instructional Services	5,647,012	5,521,972	8,342,293	8,215,648	912,307	3,153,953	1,285,121		5,351,381
Instructional Support	10,197,710	10,283,484	10,865,457	11,665,620	3,497,237	2,740,014	2,756,620		8,993,871
Other Governmental Units	759,694	692,840	895,393	1,095,489	26,928	351,550	423,363		801,841
Revenues Over/(Under)	(170,801)	100,077	176,296	(488,740)	715,756	(1,058,870)	664,197		321,083
Grand Total	\$ 16,433,615	\$ 16,598,373	\$ 20,279,439	\$ 20,488,017	\$ 5,152,228	\$ 5,186,647	\$ 5,129,301	\$ -	\$ 15,468,176
% of Annual Budget									75.5%
Revenue									
Burke County	15,435,254	15,593,566	19,157,406	19,372,740	5,054,646	4,747,179	4,731,184		14,533,009
Charter Schools	613,951	709,442	842,594	877,260	7,854	315,321	331,316		654,491
Fines & Forfeitures	371,986	241,513	242,447	206,554	43,852	123,008	66,401		233,261
Schools' Receivables	12,424	53,852	36,995	31,463	45,876	1,139	400		47,415
Grand Total	\$ 16,433,615	\$ 16,598,373	\$ 20,279,442	20,488,017	5,152,228	5,186,647	5,129,301	-	15,468,176

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BCPS						
Estimated Revenues						
2024/2025						
	Annual		March YTD			% of Budget Received
	Previous	Current Fcst	Previous	Current	% Change	
State	92,712,082	94,566,324	72,034,704	75,777,186	5.2%	80.1%
Federal	18,813,895	13,325,000	13,013,450	7,500,384	-42.4%	56.3%
Local	19,157,406	19,372,740	14,714,222	14,533,009	-1.2%	75.0%
Charter Schools	842,594	877,260	567,047	654,491	15.4%	74.6%
Fines & Forfeitures	242,447	206,554	200,662	233,261	16.2%	112.9%
Receivables	36,995	31,463	36,994	47,415	28.2%	150.7%
Special Revenues	5,486,330	5,541,193	5,603,618	6,305,152	12.5%	113.8%
Total	\$ 137,291,749	\$ 133,920,534	\$ 106,170,697	\$ 105,050,898	-1.1%	78.4%

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

CLERK - REAPPOINTMENT TO THE ADULT CARE & NURSING HOME CAC

Kat Wright, Deputy Clerk, reported that the term for Donna AuBuchon has expired, and she is interested in serving another term on this committee. Her reappointment was requested.

5	At-Large	Donna AuBuchon	A	3/15/2022
			TE	5/31/2025

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

CLERK - REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE EAST BURKE SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY BOARD

Kat Wright, Deputy Clerk, stated that Larry Abernethy has served on the East Burke Senior Center Advisory Board since 2017 and is willing to serve another term ending May 31, 2027. His seat, No. 2, represents an at-large member over the age of 55.

The reappointment of Rebecca (Becca) Bova, East Burke Senior Center Site Manager, to the East Burke Senior Center Advisory Board, Seat No. 5, is requested to complete an unexpired term ending May 31, 2027. This seat represents the Senior Center Site Manager or Ex Officio staff member.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

CLERK - RESOLUTION AMENDING PLAT REVIEW OFFICERS

Kat Wright, Deputy Clerk, relayed that the City of Morganton requested the appointment of Shelley Stevens and the removal of Mark Hall as a Plat Review Officer. Additionally, the Town of Long View has requested the appointment of Susan Matheson to replace Charles Mullis as its Plat Review Officer.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

CM - RESOLUTION EXTENDING BURKE COUNTY RECOVERY COURT - OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

Hugh Sandoe, Budget Strategy and Performance Analyst, presented an overview of the Burke County Recovery Court Program and requested adoption of a resolution to use \$216,000 of Opioid Settlement Funds to fully cover the program's operational costs from July 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026, which equates to approximately \$12,000 per month. The highlights of his presentation were as follows:

 Recovery Court Extension	 Agenda • Background • Recent operational considerations • Performance Data • Next Steps
 Cognitive Connections Background • Active Court: • 2004-2012 • 2019-current • Counties Served: • Burke • Alexander • Catawba 	 Performance Data- April 2025 • Current active participants: 19 • Growth since October: 5 • Total graduates since 2022: 16 • 12 month success rate: 57% • Post Graduation Employment Rate: 94% • Post Graduation Stable Housing: 94%
 Court Extension • Flat monthly cost for up to 30 participants • Extends funding through December, 2026	 Testimonial • Chris Otstott • Graduate • District Court Judge

Mr. Sandoe invited Chris Otstott, a graduate of the Burke County Recovery Court program, to give his testimonial. Mr. Otstott shared that he had spent nearly 20 years in active addiction, much of it while living in Morganton, and acknowledged the harm he had caused in the community. He credited the Recovery Court program with saving his life, stating that without it, he would likely be in prison or dead. Mr. Otstott emphasized the compassion and hope provided by those involved in the program, which gave him the motivation to change.

He shared that he is now over three (3) years into recovery, having graduated from the program in September 2023. He currently works for both the Burke and Catawba County Recovery Courts and is active in community recovery efforts. Mr. Otstott encouraged continued support for the program, describing it as a bridge between justice and community, and a vital service for individuals in crisis.

Commissioner Stroud congratulated Mr. Otstott on his recovery and encouraged him to lead others to recovery. Commissioner Burns also congratulated Mr. Otstott on his recovery.

When asked about his turning point, he said it was the unwavering support and belief others had in him that helped him begin to believe in himself. He expressed gratitude for being reunited with his family and being present for his two (2) daughters.

Following Mr. Otstott's testimony, Chief District Court Judge Robert Mullenax addressed the Board to speak about the Burke County Recovery Court Program. He explained that the Recovery Court typically serves between 15 and 30 participants at a time. Participants enter at Level One and progress through a months-long, five-level program that includes group and individual therapy, frequent drug screening, job training opportunities, and housing support. Since its inception in 2019, the program has had hundreds of participants, a multitude of graduations, and many of whom have gone on to pursue education, build careers, reunite with their families, and mentor others in recovery.

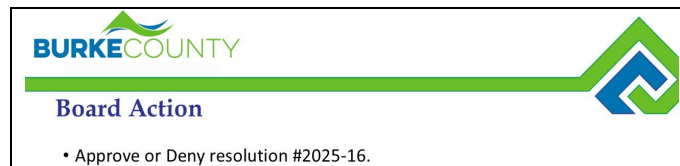
Judge Mullenax extended an open invitation from Presiding Judge Wesley Barkley to Board members to attend a session, held on alternating Tuesdays in the annex courtroom of the Burke County Courthouse. He emphasized the broader impact of the program, noting that every successful recovery represents one fewer person in the criminal justice or healthcare system and one more contributing member of the community.

Judge Dan Kuehnert offered brief comments in support of the Recovery Court program. He clarified that the judges, probation officers, and other court personnel involved in Recovery Court are paid by the state and not through grant funding, with the exception of service providers such as Cognitive Connections. He noted that the grant funding primarily supports those therapeutic services, which are essential to the program's effectiveness.



Judge Kuehnert, who serves as chair of the program's management committee, emphasized that Recovery Court provides an additional tool beyond traditional options like incarceration or standard probation, allowing judges to better address the root causes of addiction. While he expressed a desire for state-level funding—recognizing addiction as a statewide issue—he acknowledged that local funding provides greater control and accountability.

Mr. Sandoe concluded his presentation as follows:



Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

FINANCE - APPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL BUILDING CAPITAL FUNDS

Keith Lawson, Finance Director, BCPS, stated that a portion of lottery proceeds are deposited into a special fund administered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction called the Public School Building Capital fund. This fund is used by counties in addressing their school capital needs. Monies deposited into the fund accumulate and earn interest until drawn down by the county. In order to draw down funds, the Board of County Commissioners and the Board of Education must approve and submit an application for an eligible project. Historically, the County has used lottery funds for debt service payments on Patton and Draughn High Schools. This application for \$899,828 will be presented for approval by the Board of Education at their May 5, 2025, meeting.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Mr. Lawson responded to a question from Commissioner Burns about the payoff timeline. There being no further discussion, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

FINANCE - ATM LEASE AT FHEC

Matt Johnson, Deputy Finance Director, requested approval for the renewal of the State Employees' Credit Union lease, which is a small parcel of land at the Foothills Higher Education Center for a Cash Points ATM. This lease will continue the ATM's location at Foothills for a minimum of three (3) years beginning July 1, 2025, and has provisions that allow for additional terms after the initial term if the County so desires.

Budgetary Effect: The lease will keep the monthly rent at \$275 per month.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

JCPC - APPROVAL OF COUNTY PLAN FOR BURKE COUNTY & FUNDING ALLOCATION

Brian Epley, County Manager, reported that this is the annual request for approval of the JCPC funding allocation. It is consistent with the prior fiscal year.

Burke County									
NC DPS - Community Programs - County Funding Plan									
Available Funds:		\$	\$287,074	Local Match:		\$	\$93,818	Rate:	30%
DPS JCPC funds must be committed with a Program Agreement submitted in NC Allies and electronically signed by authorized officials.									
#	Program Provider	DPS-JCPC Funding	LOCAL FUNDING			OTHER	OTHER	Total	2025 DPS-JCPC Program Revenues
			County Cash Match	Local Cash Match	Local In-Kind	State/ Federal	Funds		
1	JCPC Admin	\$13,911						\$13,911	
2	Adolescent Substance Abuse Assessment & Treatment - Burke Council on Alcoholism	\$19,191	\$2,000		\$6,396	\$6,393		\$33,980	44%
3	Burke Restorative Services - Repay	\$66,347			\$19,904			\$86,251	23%
4	Just Girls - Burke - Repay	\$26,798			\$8,434		\$13,789	\$49,021	45%
5	Juvenile Mediation/Conflict Resolution Education Conflict Resolution Center	\$49,934			\$18,095			\$68,029	27%
6	Kids at Work! Burke - Aspire Youth & Family	\$27,632		\$1,000	\$8,880			\$37,512	26%
7	Psychological Services - Burke - Repay	\$21,078			\$6,923	\$2,684		\$30,685	31%
8	SAIS - Burke - Repay	\$51,183			\$15,355	\$14,385		\$80,923	37%
9	R.I.S.E. - Repay	\$11,000			\$6,831	\$10,023		\$27,854	61%
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18									
	TOTALS:	\$287,074	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$90,818	\$33,485	\$13,789	\$428,166	33%
The above plan was derived through a planning process by the Burke County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and represents the County's Plan for use of these funds in FY 2025/2026									

Additional information from the agenda packet:

The Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) plans for the needs of adjudicated and at-risk youth and assesses the need for delinquency treatment and prevention services in Burke County. The funding from the State Department of Public Safety Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) for the programs, \$287,074, shown below, requires a 30% match, which is provided by the programs themselves either by cash or in-kind donations.

The Annual Plan describes and documents each step of the state-mandated

process required to make decisions on the allocation of funds provided to Burke County by the Division of Juvenile Justice. The plan also documents the required meetings and attendance, as well as adherence to open meeting laws and other state-required processes. Most importantly, it lists the programs chosen for funding and the amounts allocated. This plan must be approved by the Burke County Board of Commissioners prior to acceptance and funding by DJJ.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

TDA - FINANCIAL UPDATE FOR THE PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 2025

Ed Phillips, CEO, TDA, in accordance with Session Law 2007-265, HB 78, reported TDA's quarterly receipts and expenditures. He shared that, for the first time, the TDA is able to invest surplus funds into a capital management account to generate additional interest income.

Mr. Phillips discussed the ongoing surge in hotel demand following Hurricane Helene, noting that occupancy has consistently exceeded available supply due to recovery workers, FEMA housing recipients, and general tourism. While tourism remains strong, he expressed uncertainty about how long recovery-related demand will continue, citing Hurricane Katrina recovery models that suggest it could last several years. He also shared that full repairs to the Blue Ridge Parkway are expected to take years.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Phillips provided an overview of current openings and closures along the Parkway, trails, and other tourism sites impacted by the storm. There being no further discussion, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

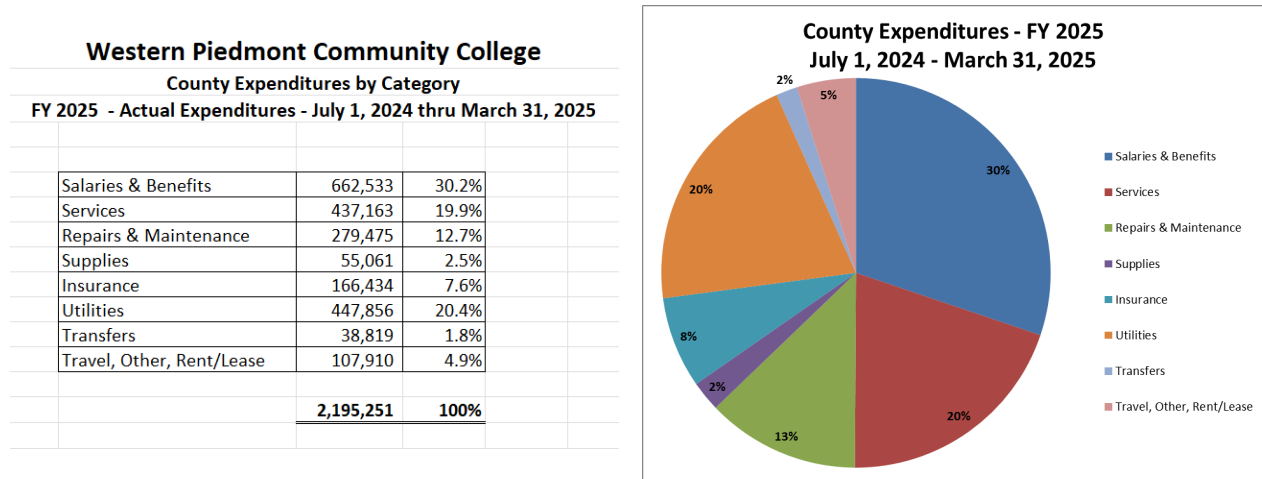
BURKE COUNTY TDA March 31, 2025			BURKE COUNTY TDA BUDGET TO ACTUAL JULY 1, 2024-MARCH 31, 2025			
				<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Available Balance</u>
Assets			Income			
1014 First Citizens Bank	\$	332,769.63	4010 • Burke Co. Govt. - Occup. Tax	\$ 1,400,000	791,769.82	\$ 608,230.18
1015 NC Capital MGMT Account	\$	625,036.60	4110 • Interest Income	\$ -	16,057.97	\$ (16,057.97)
Total Checking	\$	957,806.23	4120 • Miscellaneous	\$ 50,000	19,874.10	\$ 30,125.90
			5000 • Trolley Revenue	\$ 25,000	4,548.17	\$ 20,451.83
			Total Income	<u>\$ 1,475,000</u>	<u>832,250.06</u>	<u>\$ 642,749.94</u>
Liabilities			Expense			
2000 Accounts Payable	\$	7,030.92	5010 • Accounting/Audit	\$ 8,500	8,950.00	\$ (450.00)
2050 City of Morganton - Payable	\$	85,720.87	5020 • Marketing/Advertising	\$ 522,500	151,709.29	\$ 370,790.71
2075 Town of Valdese - Payable	\$	123,697.43	5102 • Membership Dues	\$ 2,500	965.47	\$ 1,534.53
2100 Payroll Liabilities	\$	-	5109 • Building Maintenance	\$ 4,800	3,580.00	\$ 1,220.00
Total Liabilities	\$	216,449.22	5113 • City of Morganton/Tourism	\$ 315,000	178,148.21	\$ 136,851.79
			5115 • Town of Valdese/Tourism	\$ 175,000	98,971.22	\$ 76,028.78
Equity			5117 • Bank Charges	\$ -	44.01	\$ (44.01)
3900 Retained Earnings	\$	727,137.42	5150 • Insurance	\$ 30,000	27,083.73	\$ 2,916.27
Net Income	\$	15,986.22	5180 • Office Supplies	\$ 4,000	6,167.34	\$ (2,167.34)
Total Equity	\$	743,123.64	5200 • Payroll Expenses	\$ 335,000	291,061.42	\$ 43,938.58
			5250 • Postage	\$ 1,000	660.77	\$ 339.23
Total Liabilities & Equity			5265 • Retail Items	\$ -	2,363.42	\$ (2,363.42)
			5280 • Office Rent	\$ 30,000	22,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
			5285 • Utilities	\$ 4,200	1,616.40	\$ 2,583.60
			5290 • Telephone	\$ 7,000	5,089.76	\$ 1,910.24
			5300 • Travel/Training	\$ 20,500	12,636.08	\$ 7,863.92
			5301 • Trolley Expenses	\$ 15,000	4,403.02	\$ 10,596.98
			5400 • Misc. Expense	\$ -	313.70	\$ (313.70)
			Total Expense	<u>\$ 1,475,000</u>	<u>816,263.84</u>	<u>\$ 658,736.16</u>
			Net Income	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>15,986.22</u>	<u>-15,986.22</u>

Vice Chairman Smith expressed appreciation for all the TDA does to enhance Burke County's local economy.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

WPCC – PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL DATA FOR THE PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 2025

Sandy Hoilman, Chief Financial Officer, WPCC, reported the College's financial data for the period ending March 31, 2025, as follows:



WESTERN PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE									
FY 2024-2025 SUMMARY AS OF MARCH 31, 2025									
	STATE			COUNTY			INSTITUTIONAL		
Summary of Revenues	BUDGET	ACTUAL	REMAINING	PGLT	ACTUAL	REMAINING	BUDGET	ACTUAL	REMAINING
State Appropriations	16,857,464	13,788,340							
Add. Allocations (detail below)	3,231,393								
County Appropriations				3,046,882	2,285,161				
Rent & Interest Income				13,500	26,695				
Institutional Funds							6,704,572	8,181,055	
Total Budgeted Revenues	20,088,857	13,788,340	6,300,517	3,060,382	2,311,856	748,526	6,704,572	8,181,055	(1,476,483)
Summary of Expenditures									
Institutional Support	3,484,961	2,911,419	84%	284,753	272,066	96%	258,740	55,241	21%
Curriculum Instruction	7,941,137	5,629,812	71%				594,000	609,614	103%
Non Curriculum Instruction	2,375,199	1,464,014	62%				251,000	94,852	38%
Academic Support	1,599,841	1,142,457	71%				500	-	0%
Student Support	3,457,317	2,231,942	65%				831,500	1,988,836	239%
Plant Operations & Maint.				2,775,629	1,923,185	69%			
Proprietary / Other							977,214	801,242	82%
Student Aid							3,791,618	4,246,478	112%
Capital Outlay (excluding Capital Improvements)	1,230,402	349,886	28%						
Total Budgeted Expenditures	20,088,857	13,729,530	6,359,327	3,060,382	2,195,251	865,131	6,704,572	7,796,264	(1,091,692)
		68.3%	31.7%		71.7%	28.3%		116.3%	-16.3%
ADDITIONAL FUNDING DESIGNATED FOR APPROVED PROJECTS							For Year Ending June 30, 2025		
Customized Training Projects	107,826						Total College Budget	\$ 29,853,811	
Apprenticeship/NC reversion	41,232						Total Expenditures	\$ 23,721,045	79.5%
Perkins Carryforward	25,273								
Hurricane Relief	1,858,771								
Enrollment Growth	446,436								
Longevity	180,035								
High Cost Programs	502,682								
Faculty Retention & Nursing	69,138								
Total Other	3,231,393								
</									

Ms. Hoilman reported that the spring semester went very well despite the impact of Hurricane Helene in late September. Thanks to state funding and proactive outreach by staff, the college saw an increase in enrollment rather than a decline.

The college is projecting a 6–8% increase in budgeted FTE for the upcoming year, marking the most significant growth since COVID. Final figures are pending estimates for continuing education and basic skills programs.

Ms. Hoilman provided an update on the Emergency Services Training Center, which is on track for completion by May 2026. Footings were poured last week, and vertical construction is expected to begin soon. She invited anyone interested to tour the construction site or other areas of the campus. She also noted the success of the recent Piedmont Palooza event, which drew over 1,000 attendees throughout the day. Finally, WPCC is closely monitoring developments in the state and federal budgets, particularly any potential reductions in federal grant funding that could impact the college.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

TAX DEPT. - TAX COLLECTION REPORT - APRIL 2025

Linda Wilbur, Property Listing Supervisor, presented the Tax Collection Report for April 30, 2025, as follows:

Category	Amount Collected YTD	% Collected	Balance to Collect
Property Tax	\$53,891,554.38	98.35%	\$901,624.62
Motor Vehicle Tax	\$4,890,066.82	96.33%	\$186,177.18
Current Year Taxes	\$58,731,621.20	98.18%	\$1,087,801.80
Delinquent Taxes	\$510,445.17	72.92%	\$189,554.83
Penalty & Interest	\$358,830.32	109.07%	(\$29,830.32)

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	\$55,175,134.43	\$53,891,554.38	97.67%	\$1,283,580.05

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

TAX DEPT. - RELEASE REFUND REPORT - APRIL 2025

Linda Wilbur, Property Listing Supervisor, presented the Releases Refund Report for April 30, 2025, as follows:

VTS Refunds Over \$100	
	Refund
VTS Adjustments	\$137.94

Payee Name	Address 3	Bill #	Transaction #	Refund Description	Refund Reason	Create Date	Tax Jurisdiction	Levy Type	Change	Interest Change	Total Change
RHONEY, RONALD LEE	CONNELLY SPRINGS, NC 28612	0077450532	225629146	Refund Generated due to adjustment on Bill #0077450532-2024-2024-0000-00	SLVG or RBLT TTL	4/24/2025	01	TAX	(\$110.99)	\$0.00	(\$110.99)
							36	TAX	(\$26.95)	\$0.00	(\$26.95)
										Refund	\$137.94
										Refund Total	\$137.94

Tax System Refunds and Releases			
Report Amount	Rebilled Amount	Net Release	Refund Amount
\$97,588.79	\$809.99	\$96,778.80	\$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: Business Closed							
0000075502-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	FLEX FITNESS GYM INC	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	4/16/2025	21.91	1.23	20.68
0000075502-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	FLEX FITNESS GYM INC	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	4/16/2025	20.68	20.68	0.00
0024007972-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	THE WEATHERED HOME	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	4/23/2025	33.88	33.88	0.00
Subtotal					76.47	55.79	20.68
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Mapping Correction							
0000054465-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	SMITH, LILLIAN MARIE	7/15/2024	AMANDA CONLEY	3/31/2025	17.84	17.84	0.00
Subtotal					17.84	17.84	0.00
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Not in Burke County							
0024024849-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	SMITH, EMIEL E	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	4/28/2025	11.70	5.85	5.85
0024024849-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	SMITH, EMIEL E	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	4/28/2025	5.85	5.85	0.00
0024055855-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	BEHL AVIATION ASSETS LLC	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	4/16/2025	18,760.00	18,760.00	0.00
0024063920-2023-2023-0000-00-REG	YOUNT, TODD L	7/3/2023	KAYLA BURGESS	4/24/2025	6.16	6.16	0.00
0024063920-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	YOUNT, TODD L	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	4/24/2025	6.16	6.16	0.00
0024068321-2022-2022-0000-00-REG	GLYNN, ROBERT NEIL	12/14/2022	LINDA WILBUR	4/17/2025	77.72	77.72	0.00
0024077309-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	K & A MANAGEMENT	7/15/2024	JOHN BRIDGERS	4/1/2025	77,000.00	77,000.00	0.00
Subtotal					95,867.59	95,861.74	5.85
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Deceased							
0000098090-2023-2023-0000-00-REG	LOGAN, ROBERT LIONEL	7/3/2023	KAYLA BURGESS	4/4/2025	6.16	6.16	0.00
0000098090-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	LOGAN, ROBERT LIONEL	7/15/2024	KAYLA BURGESS	4/4/2025	5.85	5.85	0.00
Subtotal					12.01	12.01	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: Discovery Billing							
0000088496-2018-2018-0000-00-REG	LAUGHTER, BILLY RAY	7/1/2018	LINDA WILBUR	4/7/2025	81.25	81.25	0.00
Subtotal					81.25	81.25	0.00
TAX DISTRICT: BURKE COUNTY RELEASE REASON: Duplicate Billing							
0000007464-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	LOPEZ-ROMAN, ALEX	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	4/7/2025	901.06	117.60	783.46
0000088496-2016-2016-0000-00-REG	LAUGHTER, BILLY RAY	7/1/2016	LINDA WILBUR	4/9/2025	33.00	33.00	0.00
0000088496-2017-2017-0000-00-REG	LAUGHTER, BILLY RAY	7/1/2017	LINDA WILBUR	4/7/2025	79.25	79.25	0.00
0000088496-2019-2019-0000-00-REG	LAUGHTER, BILLY RAY	7/1/2019	LINDA WILBUR	4/7/2025	81.33	81.33	0.00
0000088496-2020-2020-0000-00-REG	LAUGHTER, BILLY RAY	7/1/2020	LINDA WILBUR	4/7/2025	78.89	78.89	0.00
0000088496-2021-2021-0000-00-REG	LAUGHTER, BILLY RAY	7/1/2021	LINDA WILBUR	4/7/2025	82.89	82.89	0.00
0000088496-2022-2022-0000-00-REG	LAUGHTER, BILLY RAY	7/1/2022	LINDA WILBUR	4/7/2025	88.89	88.89	0.00
0000088496-2023-2023-0000-00-REG	LAUGHTER, BILLY RAY	7/3/2023	LINDA WILBUR	4/7/2025	94.16	94.16	0.00
0000088496-2024-2024-0000-00-REG	LAUGHTER, BILLY RAY	7/15/2024	LINDA WILBUR	4/7/2025	94.16	94.16	0.00
Subtotal					1,533.63	750.17	783.46
Total					97,588.79	96,778.80	809.99

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

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments; there being none, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

BOC - RESOLUTION OPPOSING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF HB 675 (2025) DUE TO ADVERSE IMPACTS ON LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRST RESPONDERS IN BURKE COUNTY

Commissioner Burns discussed a resolution opposing specific provisions of House Bill 675 (2025) under consideration by the North Carolina General Assembly. HB 675 would require all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel-including volunteer Emergency Medical Responders affiliated with local fire departments, to obtain National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) certification beginning January 1, 2026. The resolution highlights concerns about the bill's potential negative impacts on Burke County's volunteer first responders, rural EMS coverage, and overall public safety. It requests that the legislature provide exemptions, alternative pathways, or funding support to mitigate the burdens placed on rural EMS providers.

Commissioner Burns noted that although the bill was pulled from the House Rules Committee on April 29, it could still reappear in other legislative forms, including House Bill 763 or future budget legislation. He emphasized the potential negative impact such certification requirements could have on Burke County's volunteer fire departments and rural EMS services, citing increased training, financial burdens, and staffing challenges.

The resolution urges the North Carolina General Assembly to consider exemptions, alternative certification pathways, or grandfathering provisions for rural EMS personnel, along with funding and technical support to ease the transition.

The Board had no objections to leaving this on the agenda as requested, even though the bill was pulled; therefore, this item was carried forward to the next meeting without objection.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

CO. MGR. - PRESENTATION OF RECOMMENDED BUDGET FOR FY 25-26 AND SCHEDULING OF PUBLIC HEARING (PLACE HOLDER)

Brian Epley, County Manager, announced that he will present a thorough overview of the FY 2025 - 2026 recommended budget to the Board of Commissioners on Monday, May 19, 2025. A copy of the recommended budget will be filed in the office of the Clerk to the Board that day and will be available for public inspection at the Burke County Governmental Offices during regular business hours. Additionally, the recommended budget will be available for viewing on Burke County's website at: <http://www.burkenc.org/2265/Budget-Documents>.

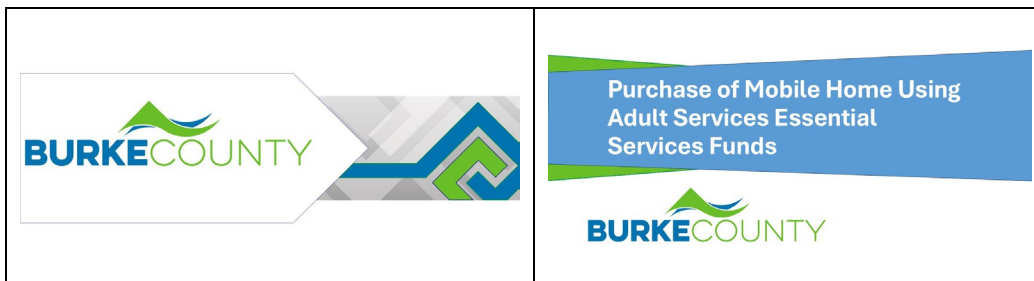
G.S. § 159-11 (b) - The budget, together with a budget message, shall be submitted to the governing board not later than June 1. The budget and budget message should, but need not, be submitted at a formal meeting of the board. The budget message should contain a concise explanation of the governmental goals fixed by the budget for the budget year, should explain important features of the activities anticipated in the budget, should set forth the reasons for stated changes from the previous year in program goals, programs, and appropriation levels, and should explain any major changes in fiscal policy.

A public hearing on the recommended budget is required, and citizens are encouraged to present written or oral comments. Adoption of the recommended budget is anticipated to occur on June 16, 2025.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

DSS - ADULT SERVICES ESSENTIAL SERVICES FUNDS RFP (PLACE HOLDER)

Brett Porter, Social Work Supervisor, and Tiffany Breden, Social Worker, presented a request for Board approval to use Adult Services Essential Services Funds provided to the County by the State for Hurricane Helene recovery purposes as follows:



Essential Services Funds Overview

Allocation of Funds Post-Hurricane Helene from NC DHHS



- Essential Services Funds were provided to counties affected by Hurricane Helene to assist in providing essential services and recovery efforts to vulnerable adults involved with Adult Services.
- 25 counties were identified in the federal disaster declaration on September 28, 2024, with 15 counties (including Burke County) classified as **Critical** and 10 counties classified as **High**.
- Burke County Adult Services was initially provided with \$131,444.
- With this funding, the County has already received the money and has been encouraged to spend it by the State for **any** cases meeting the established criteria under any of the four (4) specific Service Codes.

3

Essential Services Funds Overview

Allocation of Funds Post-Hurricane Helene from NC DHHS



- This type of funding is virtually unprecedented in Adult Services social work and will likely not ever reoccur.
- For perspective, post-COVID, Burke County Adult Services was allocated approximately \$9,000 in Essential Services Funds that could **only** be used for cases under one (1) Service Code and the County had to pay upfront and then be reimbursed by the State.

4

Essential Services Funds Criteria

Client Service Codes and Potential Uses



- Clients **must** be in 1 of 4 service codes
 - **202** – Adult Protective Services Evaluation
 - **204** – Adult Services Planning and Mobilization of Services
 - **107** – Guardianship
 - **111** – Contracted guardianship

5

Essential Services Funds Criteria

Client Service Codes and Potential Uses



- Funds can be used for resources including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Housing supports
 - Groceries & Household Supplies
 - Home Repairs/Modifications
 - Personal Care (sitter, respite, personal care aid, Life Alert, etc.)
 - Clothing/Personal Hygiene
 - Technology
 - Non-medical Transportation
 - Utilities
 - Other

6



Introduction to Mr. Terry Williams

- Service Code 204 – Adult Services Planning and Mobilization of Services
- 64 years old
- Burke County resident for 38 years
- Partial amputee (left foot)
- Military Veteran (Air Force)
- Has complex case management through the VA
- VA has exhausted all other housing resources available to them

7



Introduction to Mr. Terry Williams (Continued)

- Currently living in a towable camper that was provided to the VA by a private donor after Hurricane Helene.
- Camper is utilizing 3-pound propane canisters that run the water heater and HVAC.
- Limited time frame for continued use. He must be working toward securing sustainable housing in order to continue to use the camper.
- **Only** veteran to still be utilizing campers that were provided by the VA after Hurricane Helene.

8



Mr. Williams' Current Home Repair Needs

- Appliance Replacements
 - All appliances shorted out after power was restored to the area
- HVAC Replacement/Repair
- Electrical Evaluation & Repair
 - Only 1/3 of the home has power.
- Structural Repair
 - Sagging walls, holes in the floors, deteriorating overall structure



9



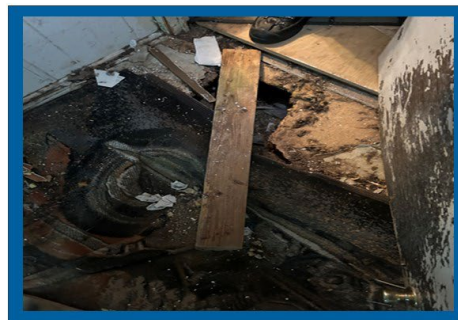
Hurdles to Success

- Denied financial assistance by FEMA
- No Homeowner's Insurance
- Appliances couldn't be delivered until power was repaired and the floors were secure enough to hold and support new ones
- Power was only working in part of the home and, due to fire hazards, couldn't be repaired until the structure was repaired
- HVAC couldn't be repaired until the structure was repaired due to not being strong enough to support new duct work
- Contractors who went to evaluate the home stated the exterior walls were decaying and the home was beyond reasonable repair
- Limited contractor availability
- WPCOG has advised that the needed home repairs are more than they can cover

10



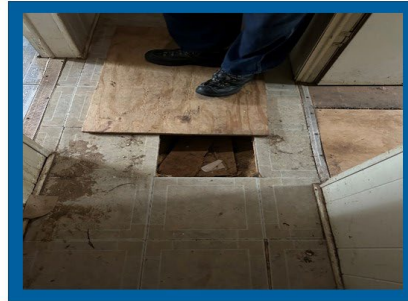
Mr. Williams' Home



11



Mr. Williams' Home (Continued)



12



What We Are Respectfully Requesting

- Approval to use Essential Services Funds to replace his place of living.
- This will allow him to remain at home independently, decrease the likelihood of him becoming homeless, abused, neglected, or exploited, and provide available assistance to a veteran and resident of Burke County utilizing existing funds allocated to provide help in situations just like this.

13



Bid Award

- Original submission deadline: April 30, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.
- Bids received: One (1)
- Deadline Extended: In accordance with the County's procurement procedures – and to encourage broader participation – the bidding period has been extended by 10 days. The new deadline is May 9, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

14

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Mr. Terry Williams responded to a question from Vice Chairman Smith. In response to a question from Commissioner Barrier, Brett Porter explained that although all known eligible clients have already been assisted, additional individuals are expected to qualify as cases move through the various service codes. He also noted the State recently provided an additional \$20,000 in funding. Chairman Brittain asked whether unused funds would be returned. Mr. Porter confirmed that any unspent funds would either be reallocated to other counties or returned to the State, with the deadline to use the funds anticipated in the near future. Due to the time-sensitive nature of the funding, the Board agreed to move the request to the Consent Agenda.

RESULT: MOVED WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING (CONSENT AGENDA) ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

DSS - MONTHLY OPERATIONAL REPORT

Korey Fisher-Wellman, DSS Director, presented the monthly operational report as follows:



SOCIAL SERVICES
Director's Monthly Report
May 5, 2025



PERSONNEL

The Burke County Department of Social Services has a full-time employee (FTE) allocation of **199 positions**. This has grown substantially over the past five (5) years, specifically following a staffing analysis in 2019. We additionally added six (6) FTEs in 2023 following the approval of Medicaid expansion in December 2023.



Total FTE's



Year	Total FTE's
2020	184
2021	185
2022	193
2023	193
2024	199

The department has 15 part-time staff, which include: one (1) income maintenance caseworker, one (1) foster care social worker, one (1) CPS social worker, two (2) CPS clerical staff, and 10 after-hours support specialists.

CURRENT OPENINGS:

Position Title	Position #	Status
IMC II	51369	Conditional Offer
IMC II	51653	Final Offer
IMC II	51767	
IMC II	51895	
IMC II	51824	
IMC III	52002	
IMC III Lead Worker	52045	
IMC III Lead Worker	51901	
IMS II	52046	Final Offer
SW IA&T	51777	Conditional Offer
SW IA&T	51435	Conditional Offer
SW IA&T	51444	Conditional Offer
SW IA&T	51906	
SW IA&T	51428	
SW IA&T	51432	
SW IA&T	51866	
SW IA&T	51775	
SWS III	51908	
CPS Program Manager	51955	

HIRING AND SEPARATION REPORT**Separations:**

- Total = 1
- Voluntary Resignation = 1

Number of Hirings:

- Total = 5
- Part Time Social Worker IA&T = 1
- Social Worker IA&T = 2
- Social Work Supervisor = 1
- Income Maintenance Caseworker II = 1

OPERATIONS
BURKECOUNTY
ECONOMIC SERVICES MOU DATA

In 2017, the North Carolina General Assembly passed **2017-41, Section 3.3**, which required performance management through an agreed-upon Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the state DHHS and all NC counties. The MOU has 13 specific performance metrics. This chart depicts the current state of Burke County by metrics:

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES						
Active Recipients	Active Cases	MOU Measure	Score	App. Timeliness Rate - Regular	App. Timeliness Rate - Expedite	Recent Timeliness Rate
11,907	6,183	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved		
WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES						
Active Recipients	Active Cases	MOU Measure	90%	90%		
		Application Timeliness	Achieved	Recent Timeliness Rate		
101	61					
MEDICAID						
Total Medicaid Recipients	Active Cases	MOU Measure	90%	Report Card MAD	Report Card Other	Straight Through Processing
28,603	22,630	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved	Achieved
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE						
SA Active Cases	MOU Performance Measure		85%	SA Timeliness Applications	SAD Timeliness Applications	
248				50%	Achieved	
ENERGY PROGRAMS						
	MOU Performance Measure		95%	95%		
	CIP Applications Processed	LEAP Applications Processed		% Processed Timely - No Source 1 Day	% Processed Timely - With Source 2 Days	
0	2			Achieved	Achieved	
CHILD CARE SUBSIDY						
	Performance Measure		95%	Application Timeliness		
	Active Cases			Achieved		
499						

ECONOMIC SERVICES UPDATE

- As of **07/01/2025**, COVID-19 waivers will be lifted. Child Support Cooperation will be required for Medicaid.
- Children under 6 will have continuous eligibility.
- Children 6-18 will have a 24-month certification period.
- LIEAP stopped as of **03/31/2025**
 - Giving out a total of **\$408,262.14**

NEW ENERGY PROGRAMS THROUGH ECONOMIC SERVICES

- Started the disaster programs on **01/15/2024**.
- March Spending for Disaster Energy: **\$204,594.76**
- Disaster Rental Assistance - Will be able to help clients with up to two (2) payments.
 - **Max - \$2,052**



ECONOMIC SERVICES UPDATE

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CPS REPORTING DATA FOR MARCH

CPS Report Data	March
Assist	29
Screen In	46
Additional	9
Screen Out	31
Re-Assign	0
COI	15
INV	8
FA	54
Total	192



CHILD WELFARE UPDATE

APRIL FOSTER CARE DATA

- 15 children entered care
- 4 children exited care
 - 2 through adoption, 1 Guardianship, and 1 reunification

There are currently **190 children** experiencing foster care in Burke County.



ADULT SERVICES UPDATE

Guardianship - 59 wards

- Contracted Wards - 17

SAIH (Special Assistance In-Home) - 51

- State caseload is 25-30; there is only one SAIH Social Worker

CAP (Community Alternatives Program)

- 141 currently with the ability to hold up to 188 or more.



EMERGING ISSUES OR UPDATES



MARCH WAS SOCIAL WORK APPRECIATION MONTH

 **Recognizing Our Heroes**

- March is dedicated to celebrating the invaluable contributions of our social workers.
- Social workers at DSS are dedicated advocates for the well-being, safety, and dignity of individuals and families in our community.

 **Impact in Our Community**

- Social workers play a vital role in promoting stability, resilience, and hope.
- They support vulnerable populations and connect individuals to critical resources and services.
- Their efforts lead to stronger, healthier, and more empowered communities.

SOCIAL WORK APPRECIATION MONTH HIGHLIGHTS

 **March Highlights at DSS**

- Appreciation Events: daily treats, wellness activities, and "thank you" messages from leadership
- Community partners provided lunch for all social work staff
- Social Worker Spotlight Event with superlative voted on by peers

 **A Message from DSS:**

"Social workers are the backbone of our mission. Their compassion, commitment, and courage create lasting change in the lives of our neighbors."



Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Brian Epley, County Manager, provided additional context for the ongoing child welfare challenges and efforts in Burke County, beginning with concerns related to juveniles in the County's custody. He explained that many of these children are older youth with severe behavioral and mental health challenges, often stemming from traumatic backgrounds. These juveniles frequently end up in DSS custody due to the lack of appropriate placements. Mr. Epley emphasized that the County is financially responsible for their care, as the state does not reimburse most of the associated costs. This results in an annual burden of approximately \$250,000 on Burke County taxpayers. He noted that most counties in North Carolina are not equipped to provide this level of care.

Mr. Epley attributed much of the placement issue to privatized behavioral health facilities, which are legally permitted to refuse service. Mr. Fisher-Wellman emphasized that Medicaid-eligible children are entitled to care, but the facilities can still reject them. Unlike hospitals, these facilities are not obligated to accept children regardless of need or capacity. As a result, children with high-level needs remain in DSS offices overnight, despite the fact that open beds exist statewide. Mr. Epley noted that this issue could be a potential area for legislative advocacy, suggesting reforms to prevent facilities from denying care based on convenience or complexity.

Shifting to the child welfare system more broadly, Mr. Epley reported a notable uptick in reported incidents of child abuse and neglect. This increase has led to a significant backlog of child protective services (CPS) cases. In response, the County has launched a temporary staffing initiative, bringing in 10 seasoned contract social workers from other counties to assist with investigations. This short-term solution has helped reduce the backlog by about 50 cases, giving social workers a little relief in their caseload. CPS social workers are working on an average of 30 cases, when the recommended caseload is 12 – 15 cases per worker.

Mr. Epley explained that the uptick in the abuse and neglect reports will likely result in more children entering the foster care system, as investigations often uncover situations requiring protective custody. He noted that CPS serves as a pipeline into foster care, further increasing pressure on an already strained system with too few licensed foster homes available.

To proactively address the anticipated increase in foster care needs, Mr. Epley announced the formation of a local coalition focused on foster parent recruitment. The kickoff meeting is scheduled for May 15, which will include stakeholders from the school system, faith community, judicial system, guardian ad litem program, and social services. The goal is to develop a coordinated strategy for recruitment, education, and partnership building to increase the

number of foster homes in Burke County and ensure children can be placed in appropriate family settings rather than temporary DSS offices.

Mr. Epley concluded by noting that these efforts are part of a broader, systematic approach aimed at improving outcomes for vulnerable children. He expressed hope that through collaboration, strategic planning, and community engagement, the County can begin to reduce caseloads, improve placement options, and support programs—such as Recovery Court—that help families retain parental rights when possible.

Mr. Fisher-Wellman responded to a question from Vice Chairman Smith by outlining the criteria used to determine abuse and neglect, in addition to explaining the investigation process and the circumstances under which a child may be removed from the home. There being no further discussion, Chairman Brittain opened the floor for a motion.

Motion: To accept the report as presented.

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

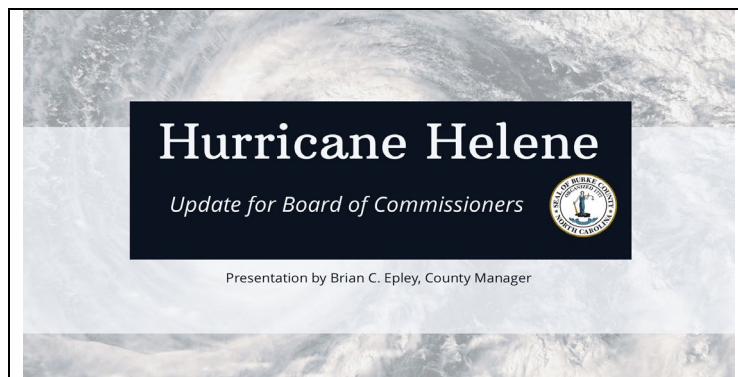
OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

Chairman Brittain asked Board members to submit their reports to the Clerk for inclusion in the regular agenda packet. He issued reminders for the upcoming NCACC and BOC meetings. He also invited youth groups to sign up to lead the Pledge of Allegiance at Commissioners' meetings.

ACTION ITEMS

CM- STORM RECOVERY MEASURES: HMG RESOLUTION, NC MOA ADOPTION, AND MANAGER'S UPDATE

County Manager Brian Epley provided an update on local recovery efforts related to Tropical Storm Helene. He requested the adoption of a resolution designating Chairman Jeff Brittain and himself as authorized agents for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, a necessary step in the application process for state-administered hazard mitigation funding. Regarding the North Carolina Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for waterway debris removal, Mr. Epley noted that the draft was not yet ready for presentation and requested that the item remain on the agenda for the regular meeting. Highlights of the storm update presentation were as follows:



North Carolina Helene Recovery

4/28/2025 Update

- \$436 million approved for 159,463 households, including money for rent, basic home repairs and other disaster-caused needs.
- \$464.4 million in Public Assistance funding obligated to the state to support community recovery.
- \$186.5 million disbursed by the U.S. Small Business Administration in low-interest disaster loans.
- 13,319 households have stayed in FEMA-paid hotel rooms (Transitional Sheltering Assistance). As of April 27, 8 households remained.
- 206 households are currently living in FEMA temporary housing units.
- 5,360 households have received rental assistance.
- 7,472 families have received \$21.5 million for repair or replacement of private-access roads and bridges.
- 6.8 million cubic yards of debris has been cleared from public rights of ways, 5 million by state contractors and 1.8 million by federal contractors.
- The waterway debris mission has removed almost 3.3 million cubic yards of debris: approximately 3 million by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and 199,283 cubic yards by state contractors.
- \$183.9 million paid in claims by the National Flood Insurance Program.

Day 220

- The Disaster Recovery Center at the Foothills Education Center had **approximately 3,500 total visits**.
- More than \$15,000,000 has been awarded in Individual Assistance (IA) to residents in Burke County as of 04-28-2025.
- Of the 13,322 valid registrations, 11,497 were referred to Individual Assistance (IA) where 7,980 have been found eligible so far for Housing Assistance (HA) and/or Other Needs Assistance (ONA).
- Less than 10 households from Burke County are checked into hotels through the TSA program.



• Current Status – Debris Removal

FEMA Requirements:

Monitoring of the debris removal operations is required. For FEMA to determine the eligibility of debris removal operations, the County must provide debris types, quantities, reduction methods, and pickup and disposal locations. FEMA requires the County to monitor all contracted debris operations to document this information and ensure that its contractor removes eligible debris. The applicant may use force account resources (including temporary hires), contractors or a combination of these for monitoring.

Private Debris Management Contractors:

The county has contracted with Debris Tech for tagging and SDR for Debris Removal.

Debris Sites

We currently have 3 Debris Sites where Debris is hauled and properly removed.

Debris Sites

- Temporary disaster debris staging/storage areas are required in order to handle the large amounts of debris generated after a storm.
- The first staging site was permitted through our County landfill.
- 2 Alternative sites were utilized: Burke County Fairgrounds, and 211 E. Fleming



Landfill Sites 1 & 2



Burke County Fairgrounds



211 E. Fleming

Debris Removal



325K Cubic Yards

To date 325,000 Cubic Yards of Debris have been removed from Burke County. We believe that is substantially complete.



25 (+) Trucks

On average, we have averaged more than 25 trucks going out daily for debris removal. This includes trucks for vegetative debris, commercial and demolition, as well as pick-up for white goods.

Debris Pile Dashboard

Burke County Government

Debris Piles

481

Last updated: 1 minute ago

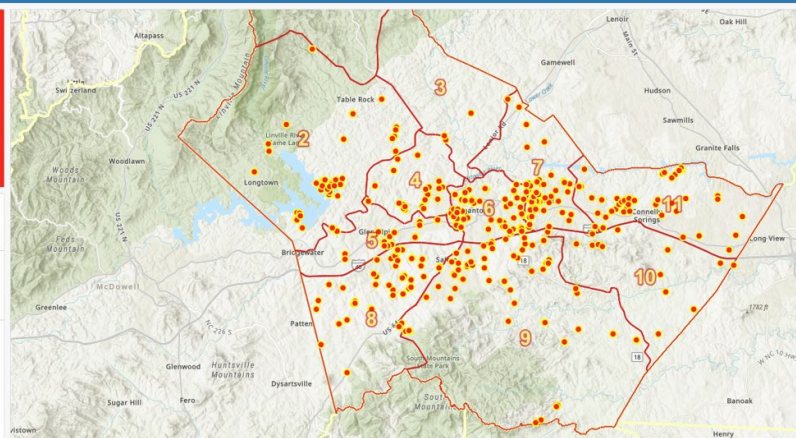
Debris Piles Reported

Survey Point

Most Recent Debris Pile Reports (last 2 days)

Survey Point

FEMA Collection Zones



Debris removal may be extended to private areas if it impacts public safety. Local governments may need to negotiate access with community associations or homeowners to ensure cleanup compliance.

Gated Community Process

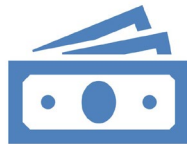
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● Identified Communities

- Long Arm
- Paradise Harbor
- Wilderness Edge Subdivision
- High Peak Estates
- Silver Creek Springs
- Laurel Ridge
- Pisgah Preserve
- Harbor Ridge
- Lake Vista
- Pine Mountain
- Enclave
- Upper Creek Community
- Silver Creek Plantation
- Paddy's Creek Gate Code
- River Club Gate Code
- Lake Rhodiss Estates

● Debris Removal Process....

- **Obtain Signatures:**
 - Get signed authorization letters from official community reps.
- **Access Gate Codes:**
 - Secure gate codes for restricted areas.
- **Collaborate with SDR:**
 - Work with SDR to manage tagging and debris removal.



2025 Tax Value Impairment

Tax Reassessment of Disaster-Damaged Property



Form Distribution

A form was included with the January 2nd tax bills. Citizens with property damage are working through the informal appeal process.



Review & Reevaluation

Appraisers will conduct site visits for property reevaluations using the percentage of completion methodology.



Completion Timeline

The county aims to complete the lost property value assessment by the end of March.

28 Affected	147 Minor	234 Major	9 Destroyed
---	---	---	---

Burke Damage Assessment Points

- ◆ Structure - Destroyed
- ◆ Structure - Major
- ◆ Structure - Minor
- ◆ Structure - Affected

2023 INFORMAL APPEAL FORM

117342023

TAXPAYER NAME	PROPERTY ADDRESS	APPEAL NUMBER	DATE OF APPEAL

The Burke County Tax Office acknowledges the significant impact of Hurricane Helene on our community in September 2024. Please note that by North Carolina General Statutes property taxes are based on the property value as of January 1st of each year. Real estate property values are set as of the most recent county-wide reappraisal. If there are no changes to the property such as new construction of a house or building, the raising of an existing structure, additions of a porch, deck, or new rooms, or major remodeling or repairs, the property value will not change until the next county-wide reappraisal.

The current real estate values for Burke County were established as of the last county-wide reappraisal on January 1, 2023. If you sustained structural damage from Hurricane Helene that is unrepaired, as of 1 January 2025, please use this sheet to inform the County Tax Office. Appraisal staff from the Tax Office will review your situation and make any necessary adjustments to your property's assessed value because of Hurricane damage.

By reporting structural damage to the tax office from the hurricane you can help ensure accurate property tax assessments for the upcoming year.

IF YOU AGREE WITH YOUR VALUE, YOU DO NOT NEED TO DO ANYTHING. If you wish to appeal your appraised value, please do so within 30 days of the date of this Notice using this form. Your appeal must be in writing.

OPINION OF VALUE:

What is the most probable price this property would sell? \$ _____

Date of Purchase: _____ Purchase Price: \$ _____

What is the basis for your opinion of value?

Recent Purchase _____ Recent Appraisal _____ Comparable Sale _____ Recent Construction _____ Hurricane Damage _____

BUILDING INFORMATION: Residential _____ Commercial _____

Please indicate the real property improvements that were damaged or are incorrectly listed on your property:

Living (Heated) Area: _____ Porch: _____ Outbuildings: _____

Garage: _____ Deck/Patio: _____ Other: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT SUPPORTS THE OWNERS OPINION OF VALUE: (Use additional sheets if necessary)

Please provide Photographs of the storm damage and any supporting documentation including bills and contractors' estimates with this form.

OWNER'S CONTACT INFORMATION (required)

Name: _____ Daytime phone: _____

Cell phone: _____ Email address (please print carefully): _____

AFFIRMATION: Under penalty prescribed by law, I hereby affirm to the best of my knowledge and belief all information submitted on this Informal Appeal form, including any accompanying statements, documents, or other information, is true and complete.

Signature of Owner: _____ Date: _____

- 695 Total Informal Value Appeal Applications Received
- \$6 M impaired residential value
- \$30 M impaired commercial value

Burke County – FEMA Public Assistance Program

Burke County FEMA Public Assistance Cost Reconciliation and Application

- Category A.....\$ 11M (ROW Debris)
- Category B.....\$ 600k (Emergency Operations)
- Category E.....\$ 5k (Building Improvements)
- Category F.....\$ 5k (Dobson Knob Tower)
- Category G.....\$ 5k (Parker Rd/Simpson Park)

Emerging Issues & Next Steps



• Waterway Debris

- Debris from waterways that is necessary to eliminate an immediate threat to life, public health and safety or improved property is eligible for removal.

Option 1 - Contracting with a private debris management firm

Option 2 - Contracting with N.C. Emergency Management

Option 3 - Contracting with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Waterway Debris

Site #1 - Waterway Debris Pictures



Debris Type	
Vegetative	
LAT	35.742463
LON	-81.835506

Description	
Debris is against the right embankment. Debris is submerged.	

PROJECT COST ESTIMATE

Each site's imagery is meticulously analyzed to estimate the costs associated with debris removal and the necessary monitoring procedures. The primary cost components are broken down into several key categories: embankment length, debris removal and disposal, and monitoring and documentation. The estimation methodology follows a structured approach using standardized rates and site-specific classifications.

Debris Removal Cost Calculation
The cost of debris removal is calculated by applying a unit rate of \$23 per cubic yard (CY) for the removal and disposal of debris. The total cubic yards of debris are determined based on the site's classification: "Light" Monitoring or "Heavy" — each of which has a predicted estimated debris volume. For instance, sites classified as "Light" typically generate 1,000 cubic yards of debris per mile, while "Medium" sites yield an estimated 1,000 cubic yards per mile, and "Heavy" sites produce approximately 1,000 cubic yards per mile. These values are used as guides for the quantity of debris to be removed for the purpose of cost estimation.

Embankment Length and Waterway Calculation
Waterway lengths are derived using the centerline of the waterway, providing an initial measurement of the affected area. However, the cost calculation incorporates the embankment length along both sides of the waterway, which is crucial for determining the scope of debris removal along the banks. The embankment length directly impacts the cost, as both the left and right sides of the waterway may require debris clearance. Each linear foot (L.F.) of embankment is priced at \$1.1, which serves as the basis for estimating the total cost of debris removal along these segments.

Monitoring and Documentation
In addition to debris removal, each site requires a monitoring and documentation component to track the progress of debris removal and ensure that regulatory standards are met. The cost for these services is calculated as 10% of the total debris removal cost. This percentage covers the cost of monitoring the site conditions, conducting routine inspections, and documenting the operation's progress for compliance purposes.

Total Estimated Cost Breakdown
The overall cost estimate for each site is determined by aggregating the debris removal costs (calculated based on the cubic yard volume and embankment length) and the monitoring costs (calculated as a percentage of the removal costs). The debris classification (Light, Medium, or Heavy) plays a critical role in determining the anticipated debris volume, which then informs the overall cost estimation process. The classifications are not only quantitative, but also qualitative in nature, as they provide a direct link between the site's debris condition and the estimated volume of material to be cleared per mile.

Site Review and Classification
Each site undergoes a detailed review where it is assigned a debris classification based on visual inspection and remote sensing imagery. These classifications — Light, Medium, or Heavy — are pivotal in determining the anticipated debris volume, which then informs the overall cost estimation process. The classifications are not only quantitative, but also qualitative in nature, as they provide a direct link between the site's debris condition and the estimated volume of material to be cleared per mile.

Application of the Cost Model
The resulting cost model is applied across all sites, with adjustments made for local factors such as accessibility, environmental sensitivity, and specific regulatory requirements. The model ensures that each site's debris removal and monitoring costs are estimated accurately, providing a reliable basis for budgeting and project planning.

Removal & Disposal	\$231,975
Linear Embankment	\$442,000
Debris Monitoring	\$202,500
Total	\$876,475

Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR)



FEMA PPDR stands for **Private Property Debris Removal**. It's a program that helps remove debris from private properties after a disaster. The goal of PPDR is to protect public health and safety, and to help the community recover from an economic impact.

Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR)



- Removal of potentially eligible storm-generated debris from private property, private roads and/or driveways
- Demolition of hazardous structures
- Eliminates immediate threats to life, public health, or safety
- Eliminates immediate threats of significant damage to improved public or private property
- Vegetative debris
- Construction and demolition debris
- White goods (household appliances)
- Household hazardous waste

Progress....

- On March 3rd, 2025, the Burke County Board of Commissioners gave direction to staff to request assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for both waterway debris removal and private property debris removal (PPDR).
- The request was submitted on March 4 at 16:10. Burke County staff had previously held a meeting with Mark Cardwell (USACE) on February 10th.
- Additional Written Communications Were Made:
 - March 11
 - March 17
 - April 8
- April 15 – Met with State EM Staff (NC SMART)
 - Version I,II,&III State MOU
- 5/2 & 5/5 – Discussion with Will Polk



NC Department of Public Safety
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Edna H. Buffaloe, Jr., Secretary
William C. Ray, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Emergency Management Agencies
FROM: William C. Ray, Director & Deputy Homeland Security Advisor
North Carolina Division of Emergency Management
DATE: 28 February 2025
SUBJECT: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Debris Removal Tasking

The State of North Carolina requested support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on 8 October 2024 to assist with clearance and removal of disaster-related debris in the declared disaster area.

To date, USACE has obligated contracts for over \$475 million and they estimate an additional \$400-600 million is required to complete already assigned missions.

With the current expiration of the 100% federal cost share on 27 March 2025, the State of North Carolina needs to evaluate any additional taskings to USACE to ensure the agencies are both cost effective and meet the timelines and needs of the local community.

Effective 28 February 2025, we will need to officially scope and formally mission assign USACE for any new mission requests. We will need to assess all new requests prior to tasking USACE to ensure the needs of the respective community are met and in an efficient, cost-effective manner.

Jurisdictions wishing to engage USACE for support, for new missions or to shift missions from another contractor, should make a request in writing to their NCEM Public Assistance Grant Manager. NCEM will work with USACE on scoping, cost estimates, and then work with the local jurisdiction to make a determination on the request.

Our focus remains supporting local jurisdictions across the impacted area in all aspects of response and recovery. Please address any questions or concerns to NCEM Recovery Public Assistance Manager, James Brinker at jbrinker@ncdps.gov.



1336 Gold Star Drive Raleigh, NC 27607 | 4336 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-4236
Phone: 919-825-2000 | Fax: 919-825-2865 | www.ncdps.gov www.ncdps.gov
An Equal Opportunity Organization

Home Mitigation Block Grant



Steve McGugan

Assistant Director - Hazard Mitigation

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP): Reducing Future Risks After Disasters

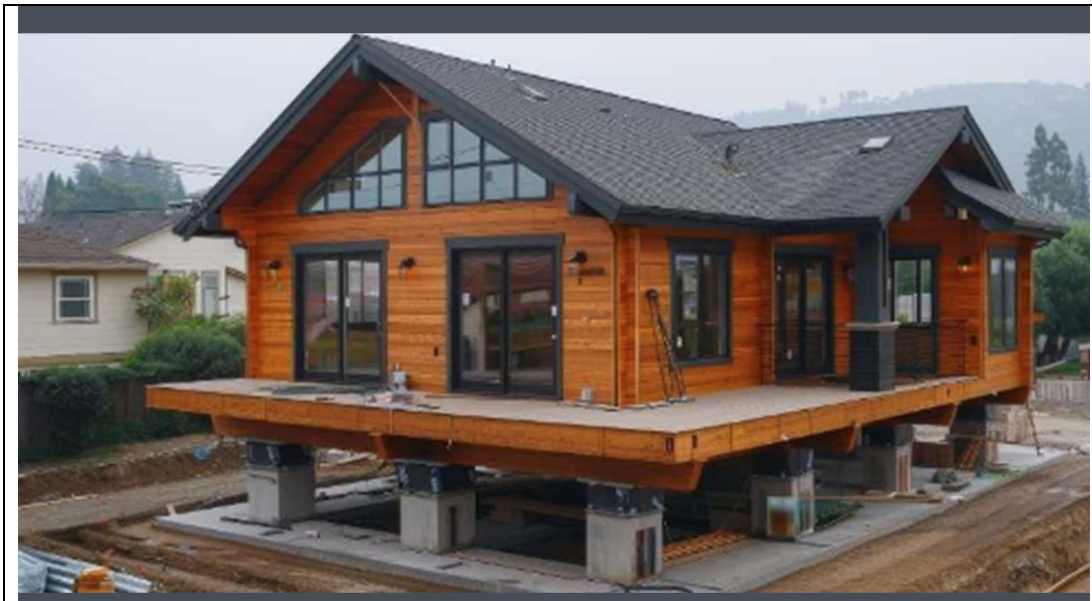
- County residents can receive funding to make their homes more resilient through home projects that reduce the long-term risk and impacts of natural hazards, such as floods, wildfires, and storms.
- The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is a FEMA-funded initiative aimed at reducing or eliminating future damages and losses following a disaster. While federally funded, the program is managed in North Carolina by the Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management.

For property owners, HMGP offers funding for various mitigation strategies, including elevation, home mitigation reconstruction, and acquisition.

- The **elevation project** raises the home as is, demolishes the old foundation, and builds a new foundation that raises the first floor approximately 2 feet above the 100-year flood elevation. In this project, the homeowner is provided temporary lodging while work is done on the home, nothing is moved out of the home.
- The **mitigation reconstruction project** is used when it is determined a home cannot be raised due to the home's instability. The program will move out all the household furnishings and store them, provide temporary lodging, demolish the old home, build a new foundation at 2 feet above 100-year flood elevation and build a new home on the foundation. These are contractor grade homes, no custom furnishings.
- The **acquisition project** buys the property from the homeowner, at the value of the property the day prior to the disaster, once the homeowner relocates, the home is demolished, and the property remains as greenspace into perpetuity.

In all three of these projects, FEMA provides 75% of the cost and the state pays the 25% match, **there is no cost to the homeowner**. The program does not have an income requirement and is intended to assist all of those impacted by the disaster.

Participation in the program is entirely voluntary and property owners may withdraw their applications anytime.



● Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP): Reducing Future Risks After Disasters

- 14 Acquisition Applications
- 3 Elevation Applications
- 1 Renovation Application

Town	Application
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Acquisition
Morganton	Elevation Mitigation Reconstruction
Morganton	Elevation Mitigation Reconstruction
Morganton	Elevation Mitigation Reconstruction
Nebo	TBC
Nebo	Acquisition
Nebo	Acquisition
Nebo	Acquisition

● Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP): Reducing Future Risks After Disasters

Board of Commissioners Considerations:

Approve/Deny/Modify Resolution No. 2025-15

Hazard Mitigation Block Grant

Questions

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Barrier inquired about any final deadlines from FEMA for completing the waterway and private property debris removal process. Mr. Epley responded that no firm FEMA deadline has been communicated to the County. He noted that State Emergency Management Director Will Ray had initially referenced a potential June 30th target for debris collection completion, but that may have changed over time.

He clarified that the only formal deadline he is aware of was the 180-day window following the storm, during which 100% of cleanup costs were federally reimbursed. That window expired on March 27th, and any work performed after that date falls under a 90/10 cost share—with the federal government covering 90% of eligible costs. The remaining 10% may be covered by the State, the County, or shared between the two (2), but no clear guidance has been provided on that distribution yet.

He emphasized that this uncertainty around the local financial responsibility was a key reason for recommending that the County not manage private property debris removal (PPDR) in-house. He cited Buncombe County's PPDR contract, which came back at \$75,000 per parcel, as an example of the potential cost burden, suggesting that even a small share of that cost could be substantial for the County.

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

Motion: To accept the report as presented.

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

Motion: To adopt Resolution No. 2025-15.

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

This space is intentionally left blank.

Res. No. 2025-15 reads as follows:

RESOLUTION DESIGNATION OF APPLICANT'S AGENT North Carolina Division of Emergency Management	
Organization Name (hereafter named Organization)	Burke County
Disaster Number	4827-NC
Applicant's State Cognizant Agency for Single Audit purposes (If Cognizant Agency is not assigned, please indicate):	N/A
Applicant's Fiscal Year (FY) Start:	2024
Month:	July
Day:	01
Applicant's Federal Employer's Identification Number:	56 - 6000280
Applicant's Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) Number:	37023
PRIMARY AGENT	SECONDARY AGENT
Agent's Name	Jeffrey C. Brittain
Agent's Name	Brian Epley
Organization	Burke County
Organization	Burke County
Official Position	Chairman, Board of Commissioners
Official Position	County Manager
Mailing Address	P.O. Box 219
Mailing Address	P.O. Box 219
City, State, Zip	Morganton, NC 28680
City, State, Zip	Morganton, NC 28680
Daytime Telephone	828-433-7185
Daytime Telephone	828-764-9355
Facsimile Number	828-764-9352
Facsimile Number	828-764-9352
Pager or Cellular Number	828-443-0016
Pager or Cellular Number	704-418-0846
BE IT RESOLVED BY the governing body of the Organization (a public entity duly organized under the laws of the State of North Carolina) that the above-named Primary and Secondary Agents are hereby authorized to execute and file applications for federal and/or state assistance on behalf of the Organization for the purpose of obtaining certain state and federal financial assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief & Emergency Assistance Act, (Public Law 93-288 as amended) or as otherwise available. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the above-named agents are authorized to represent and act for the Organization in all dealings with the State of North Carolina and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for all matters pertaining to such disaster assistance required by the grant agreements and the assurances printed on the reverse side hereof. BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT the above-named agents are authorized to act severally. PASSED AND APPROVED this 5 day of May, 2025 <i>Jeffrey C. Brittain</i>	
GOVERNING BODY	CERTIFYING OFFICIAL
Name and Title	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman
Name and Title	Kay Draughn
Name and Title	Phil Smith, Vice Chairman
Name and Title	Official Position Clerk to the Board
Name and Title	Commissioners Barrier, Burns & Stroud
Name and Title	Daytime Telephone 828-764-9354
CERTIFICATION I, Kay Draughn, (name) duly appointed and Clerk (title) of the Governing Body, do hereby certify that the above is true and correct copy of a resolution passed and approved by the Governing Body of (organization) on the 5 day of May, 2025 Date: 5-5-2025 Signature: <i>Kay Draughn</i> Rev. 06/02	

APPLICANT ASSURANCES

The applicant hereby assures and certifies that it will comply with the FEMA regulations, policies, guidelines and requirements including OMB's Circulars No. A-95 and A-102, and FMC 764, as they relate to the application, acceptance and use of Federal funds for this Federally assisted project. Also, the Applicant gives assurance and certifies with respect to and as a condition for the grant that:

1. It possesses legal authority to apply for the grant, and to finance and construct the proposed facilities; that a resolution, motion or similar action has been duly adopted or passed as an official act of the applicant's governing body, authorizing the filing of the application, including all understandings and assurances contained therein, and directing and authorizing the person identified as the official representative of the applicant to act in connection with the application and to provide such additional information as may be required.
2. It will comply with the provisions of Executive Order 11980, relating to Floodplain Management and Executive Order 11989, relating to Protection of Wetlands.
3. It will have sufficient funds available to meet the non-Federal share of the cost for construction projects. Sufficient funds will be available when construction is completed to assure effective operation and maintenance of the facility for the purpose constructed.
4. It will not enter into a construction contract(s) for the project or undertake other activities until the conditions of the grant (project) have been met.
5. It will provide and maintain competent and adequate architectural engineering supervision and inspection at the construction site to insure that the completed work conforms with the approved plans and specifications; that it will furnish progress reports and such other information as the Federal grantor agency may need.
6. It will operate and maintain the facility in accordance with the minimum standards as may be required or prescribed by the applicable Federal, State and local agencies for the maintenance and operation of such facilities.
7. It will give the grantor agency and the Comptroller General, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the grant.
8. It will require the facility to be designed to comply with the "American Standard Specifications for Making Buildings and Facilities Accessible to, and Usable by the Physically Handicapped," Number A117-1.181, as modified (41 CFR 101-17.723). The applicant will be responsible for conducting inspections to insure compliance with these specifications by the contractor.
9. It will cause work on the project to be commenced within a reasonable time after receipt of notification from the approving Federal agency that funds have been approved and will see that work on the project will be prosecuted to completion with reasonable diligence.
10. It will not dispose of or encumber its title or other interests in the site and facilities during the period of Federal interest or while the Government holds bonds, whichever is the longer.
11. It agrees to comply with Section 511, P.L. 93-288 and with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) and in accordance with Title VI of the Act, no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the applicant receives Federal financial assistance and will immediately take any measures necessary to effectuate this agreement. If any endowment or structure is provided or improved with the aid of Federal financial assistance extended to the Applicant, this assurance shall obligate the Applicant, in the case of any transfer of such property, any transferee, for the period during which the real property or structure is used for a purpose for which the Federal financial assistance is extended or for another purpose involving the provision of similar services or benefits.
12. It will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that is or gives the appearance of being motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or their relatives, particularly those with whom they have family, business, or other ties.
13. It will comply with the requirements of Title II and Title III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provides for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced as a result of Federal and Federally assisted programs.
14. It will comply with all requirements imposed by the Federal grantor agency concerning social requirements of law, program requirements, and other administrative requirements approved in accordance with OMB Circular A-102, P.L. 93-288 as amended, and applicable Federal Regulations.
15. It will comply with the provisions of the Hatch Act which limit the political activity of employees.
16. It will comply with the minimum wage and maximum hours provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, as they apply to hospital and educational institution employees of State and local governments.
17. (To the best of his/her knowledge and belief) the disaster relief work described on each Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Project Application for which Federal Financial assistance is requested is eligible in accordance with the criteria contained in 44 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 206, and applicable FEMA Handbooks.
18. The emergency or disaster relief work described for which Federal Assistance is requested hereunder does not or will not duplicate benefits received for the same loss from another source.
19. It will (1) provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements and right-of-way necessary for accomplishment of the approved work; (2) hold and save the United States free from damages due to the approved work or Federal funding.
20. This assurance is given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal grants, loans, reimbursements, advances, contracts, property, discounts of other Federal financial assistance extended after the date hereof to the Applicant by FEMA, that such Federal Financial assistance will be extended in reliance on the representations and agreements made in this assurance and that the United States shall have the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance. This assurance is binding on the applicant, its successors, transferees, and assigns, and the person or persons whose signatures appear on the reverse as authorized to sign this assurance on behalf of the applicant.
21. It will comply with the flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 100(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, Public Law 93-234, 87 Stat. 375, approved December 31, 1973. Section 100(a) requires, on and after March 1, 1975, the purchase of flood insurance in communities where such insurance is available as a condition for the receipt of any Federal financial assistance for construction or acquisition purposes for use in any area that has been identified by the Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency as an area having special flood hazards. The phrase "Federal financial assistance" includes any form of loan, grant, guarantee, insurance payment, rebate, subsidy, disaster assistance loan or grant, or any other form of direct or indirect Federal assistance.
22. It will comply with the insurance requirements of Section 314, P.L. 93-288, to obtain and maintain any other insurance as may be reasonable, adequate, and necessary to protect against further loss to any property which was replaced, restored, repaired, or constructed with this assistance.
23. It will defer funding of any projects involving flexible funding until FEMA makes a favorable environmental clearance, if this is required.
24. It will assist the Federal grantor agency in its compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470), Executive Order 11593, and the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1960 (16 U.S.C. 469a) as amended by (a) consulting with the State Historic Preservation Officer on the conduct of investigations, as necessary, to identify properties listed or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places that are subject to adverse effects (see 36 CFR Part 50.10) by the activity, and notifying the Federal grantor agency of the existence of any such properties, and by (b) complying with all requirements established by the Federal grantor agency to avoid or mitigate adverse effects upon such properties.
25. It will, for any repairs or construction financed hereunder, comply with applicable standards of safety, decency and sanitation and in conformity with applicable codes, specifications and standards, and will insure the natural hazards in areas in which the proceeds of the grant or loan are to be used and take appropriate action to mitigate such hazards, including safe land use and construction practices.

STATE ASSURANCES

The State agrees to take any necessary action within State capabilities to insure compliance with these assurances and agreements by the applicant or to assume responsibility to the Federal government for any deficiencies not resolved to the satisfaction of the Regional Director.

Mr. Epley and the Board discussed the status of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between North Carolina Emergency Management and Burke County regarding debris removal assistance related to Hurricane Helene. Mr. Epley noted that the final version of the MOA has not yet been received from the State's general counsel and, therefore, is not ready for approval at this time.

There was discussion about whether to proceed with a motion to authorize execution of the MOA in advance or wait until the final document is available. After Mr. Epley responded to additional questions and additional discussion, the Board agreed to move the MOA consideration to the next regular meeting, allowing time for the document to be finalized and reviewed.

RESULT: MOVED THE MOA WITHOUT OBJECTION TO THE NEXT MEETING ON MAY 19, 2025, AT 6:00 P.M.

CLOSING REMARKS ON HOUSE BILL 765 AND REQUEST FOR STAFF ACTION

Commissioner Burns shared that beginning April 16th, he received a flurry of phone calls regarding House Bill 765. Several constituents even traveled to Raleigh to attend a committee meeting on the bill, which appeared to go well overall, with only two (2) opposing votes. The

North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) encouraged counties to take local action and also shared examples of opposition resolutions for reference.

Commissioner Burns asked that County staff review House Bill 765 and prepare a draft resolution for the Board's consideration at the next regular meeting. He outlined several key concerns with the bill, including:

- Disqualifying commissioners from participating in rezoning votes due to prior informal discussions or expressed opinions.
- Mandating residential densities of 4 to 6 units per acre based strictly on population data, without regard for local infrastructure or development plans.
- Promoting the elimination of conditional zoning at the applicant's request.
- Subjecting consistency statements to judicial review, increasing the risk of litigation.
- Requiring decisions on rezonings and site plans within 90 days, regardless of complexity.
- Imposing new legal liabilities and potential punitive damages on counties, municipalities, and individual board or council members.

Commissioner Burns expressed serious concern that these provisions would strip local governments of essential planning tools, result in rushed and poorly informed decisions, and expose officials to increased legal risk. He emphasized that the bill promotes a one-size-fits-all approach to zoning that is inappropriate for Burke County and detrimental to good governance statewide.

ADJOURN

Motion: To adjourn at 5:14 p.m.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Randy Burns, Commissioner
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