

MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'

SPECIAL MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 2025.

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met to hold a Special Meeting on October 21, 2025, in the Commission Chamber at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 1:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Amanda Edwards; Vice-Chair Moore; Commissioner Terri Wells;
Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Jennifer Horton; Commissioner Drew Ball.

Absent: Commissioner Parker Sloan.

The Board met to hold interviews for the Board of Adjustment. The following candidates were interviewed: Wesley Greene, Katherine Morosani, Gregory Phillips, Gabriel Quesinberry, William Belt, Mark Diaz, David Barley, Carol McCrory.

MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'

BRIEFING MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 2025.

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met to hold a Briefing Meeting on October 21, 2025, in the Commission Chamber at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Amanda Edwards; Vice-Chair Moore; Commissioner Terri Wells;
Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Jennifer Horton; Commissioner Drew Ball.

Absent: Commissioner Parker Sloan.

The following items were discussed:

Fairview Holiday Parade

Commissioner Horton introduced Cory, who discussed the purpose of holding a Fairview Christmas Parade. Cory explained that the parade is scheduled for December 21, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., in Fairview.

Commissioner Horton asked if the Board had any questions. Hearing none, she recommended that the item be placed on the regular meeting agenda for a vote to approve the road closure ordinance required to hold the parade. The Board agreed.

Helene Update

Jeremiah LeRoy provided an update on the Helene Recovery Office. He explained that the purpose will be to lead Buncombe County Helene recovery efforts, to include managing the Recovery Plan, overseeing projects, provide updates and collaborating with external partners. He further explained the proposal to create an office of 5 employees, one recovery officer, 3 project managers and 2 financial and grant administrators, which would be grant funded positions. He explained their roles and how potential grant funding for the positions could be acquired.

Ellis Matheson, Public Health Director provided an update on the Community Assessment for Public Health Response (CASPER) following Hurricane Helene. She explained that the CASPER was conducted from June 4-6 by BCHHS-DPF and 210 surveys were completed. The questionnaire included 30 household-level questions to assess hurricane impacts. She further explained that 45.7% of households reported at least one member experiencing new or worsening behavioral health symptoms since Hurricane Helene and that 7.9% of household had difficulties accessing medical care. Matheson provided recommendations from the survey results that address: whole-person healthcare, emergency preparedness, and environmental health. To conclude, she stated that Public Health plans to partner with other county departments, community organizations, and individual communities to incorporate these recommendations into other Helene recovery plans and projects.

FEMA Housing Updates

Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2025

Ina Chan, FEMA IA Branch Manager provided the update. She provided an overview of the program, to include housing assistance, temporary housing, direct housing, sales/donations and transportable temporary housing units. She stated that there were 199 destroyed homeowners and 179 renters and that 32 survivors currently reside in FEMA's temporary housing program. Chan further explained the conditions for sales/donations and said that FEMA will only donate the TTHU as a last resort if the occupant is unable to achieve permanent housing through no fault of their own.

Strategic Plan Update

Kathleen Blackney provided the Strategic Plan update. She provided an overview of the themes identified from the Envision Buncombe Survey. Blackey further explained the gaps identified from community feedback, which included: youth mental health, homelessness, aging population, and access to care. She further explained the County's role in relation to each of the identified gaps as well as staff's recommendation. The Board reviewed each of the recommendations and agreed to move forward for adoption at the next meeting on November 6, 2025.

MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'

REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 2025.

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met to hold a Regular Meeting on October 21, 2025, in the Commission Chamber at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Amanda Edwards; Vice-Chair Moore; Commissioner Terri Wells; Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Jennifer Horton; Commissioner Drew Ball.

Absent: Commissioner Parker Sloan.

Chair Edwards opened the meeting and provided opening remarks.

CONSENT

1. Approval of the October 7 Combined Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of the Revised Conflict of Interest Policy
3. Approval of the Revised Separation Policy
4. Approval of the Revised Grant Funded Positions Policy
5. Approval of the Board of Commissioners Travel Policy
6. Approval of the Fairview Holiday Parade Ordinance (added from Briefing meeting)

Commissioner Horton made a motion to add the approval of the Fairview Holiday Parade Ordinance to the consent agenda. Commissioner Ball seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Horton made the motion to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Whitesides seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

GOOD NEWS

1. GFOA Distinguished Budget Award

John Hudson, Budget Director and budget team members explained that Buncombe County has received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the FY2026 Budget Document. The award recognizes budget documents of the highest quality based on best practices in state and local government budgeting and finance. In addition, when all reviewers rate specific categories at the highest level, the GFOA awards special recognition. This budget award came with special recognition in Capital Programs for the second consecutive year. He said that each year the Budget Office works to achieve this award and is the product of the efforts of all departments in building a budget that serves the community.

Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2025

PRESENTATIONS

1. Health & Human Services Board Annual Report

Dan Frayne, HHS Board Chair provided the update. He reviewed key accomplishments, challenges, and ongoing efforts to support staff and community programs. Notably, HHS coordinated Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance or “DSNAP” benefits following Tropical Storm Helene and completed a successful harm reduction pilot. He said that HHS also sustained recovery and preparedness operations to ensure that critical services remain available to residents while planning for future emergencies. Moving forward, HHS looks to adapt to changing state and federal fiscal landscapes while staying focused on minimizing disruptions to public service delivery. As Chair Dr. David Frayne shared the HHS Board is focused on navigating potential service delivery while continuing its focus on preparedness to best support our community.

Commissioner Ball if there have been disruptions and thanked the HHS Board for staying on top of these updates and asked how the BOC can help to advocate with State and Federal partners.

2. 2025 Respiratory Virus Season Update

Ellis Mathes, Public Health Director, provided the annual report. She explained that Respiratory viruses remain a leading cause of hospitalization and death, and multiple viruses may circulate simultaneously, increasing strain on healthcare systems. She said that last season was among the most severe in recent years – North Carolina recorded 544 flu-related deaths, including 19 in Buncombe County. Looking ahead, there is potential for a winter surge in COVID-19, while the burden of RSV is expected to be lower due to new vaccines for adults over 60, pregnant individuals, and monoclonal antibody treatments for infants and high-risk toddlers.

She explained that residents are encouraged to get vaccinated at local pharmacies, community medical providers, or the Buncombe County Immunization Clinic (40 Coxe Ave., Asheville). Those who are sick should stay home, wash their hands frequently, and cover cough and that anyone with questions about vaccines or illness prevention should consult a healthcare provider, pharmacist, or nurse.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. ZPH2025-00025 Edins Map Amendment: Kevin Edins has applied to rezone one (1) parcel of land further identified as PIN 9653-57-2381 from R-2 Residential to CS – Commercial Service.

Haylee Madfis provided the background information. She explained that Kevin Edins has applied to rezone one (1) parcel of land further identified as PIN 9653-57-2381 from R-2 Residential to CS – Commercial Service. The property is .92 acres and is Residential Building lot with septic and public water. She provided the consistency analysis and said that staff recommends approval based on these findings. The only inconsistency was that the proposed

Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2025

rezoning does not allow for any transition between higher intensity uses and lower intensity uses. The Planning Board also recommended approval on August 18, 2025.

The Chair opened the public hearing at 5:37 p.m. There was no public comment. The Public Hearing was closed at 5:37 p.m.

Vice-Chair Moore made the motion to approve the rezoning request, as it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Whitesides seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Budget Amendment to Establish Recovery Office and Increase Helene Budget

John Hudson, Budget Director This request is to establish five positions — two fiscal analysts and three project managers — for the Helene Recovery Office that will be grant funded. This action also requests an increase in budget of \$14,001,245 for related salary and benefits, as well as Helene-related projects to include landslides, park projects, and tower road repairs.

The breakdown for these projects is as follows:

- Landslides - \$10,296,428
- Tower Roads - \$1,324,343
- Owen Park - \$1,807,912
- Additional Parks projects - \$572,562

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

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The Board held interviews earlier in the day and voted to appoint the following members to the regular seats: Gregory Phillips, Gabriel Quesinberry; and Mark Diaz. The board voted to appoint Wesley Greene, William (Tom) Belt, David Barley and Carol McCrory as alternate members.

Adjourned at 5:56 p.m.