

MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'

REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 3, 2026.

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met to hold a Regular Meeting on February 3, 2026, in the Commissioner Chambers at 200 College Street in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Amanda Edwards; Vice-Chair Martin Moore; Commissioner Terri Wells, Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Parker Sloan; Commissioner Drew Ball; and Commissioner Jennifer Horton.

The Chair opened the meeting and provided opening remarks.

CONSENT

1. Approval of the January 20 Combined Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of the December 2025 Tax Collection Report
3. Resolution Ordering the Advertisement of Delinquent Real Estate
 1. Property Tax Liens
4. Resolution Approving Jury Commission Compensation
5. Budget Amendment for Community Waste Reduction & Recycling Grant

Commissioner Sloan made the motion to approve the agenda and consent agenda. Commissioner Ball seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. David Clarke - (10 mins) - David Clark, a UNC Asheville professor and member of Friends of the Woods, provided public comment on behalf of himself, not the University. He urged the commission to help protect campus green space and address concerns about the Millennium Campus project. He cited staff shortages, low morale, alienated students, and lack of transparency, warning that stagnant funding and administrative decisions are harming the university's identity and academic freedom.
2. Anne Walch- opposed UNCA's plan to clear 45 acres for a soccer stadium, criticizing the lack of transparency and a committee dominated by insiders, and urged respect for public resources purchased with taxpayer funds.
3. Micah Sunn - shared a story about a greedy king destroying a sacred grove.

MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Winter Storm Fern Debrief

Ryan Cole provided the debrief. He gave an overview of the Winter Storm Fern planning and storm preparedness. He highlighted the preparedness improvements, which included logistics and feeding plan among others, as well as the preparedness gap, which included not having a dedicated county shelter facility and EOC facilities equipment and functioning among others. He noted that three shelters were set up: Erwin Highschool, Reuters YMCA and Hearts

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with Hands. The highest total shelter occupancy was 83 and there were 105 shelter staff. Lastly, Cole covered the EOC objectives for the storm.

2. Code Purple and Winter Shelter Update

Lacy Hoyle, Homeless Program Manager, provided an update on Code Purple and winter shelters. She thanked the many partners for their participation in opening shelters and staffing them over the storms and highlighted the roles of each. The FY25-26 Code Purple shelters are ABCCM- Transformation Village, Salvation Army and Homeward Bound- AHOPE with a total of 71 beds. Hoyle stated that most of these providers have exceeded bed capacity on a regular basis, including overflow capacity. She stated that Safe Shelter operates nightly winter shelter started November 2025 to March 30, 2025, which operates regardless of Code Purple status. Likewise, these operations regularly exceed bed capacity.

Commissioner Whitesides spoke about solving the root of this ongoing problem and Chair Edwards spoke about the formation of the Continuum of Care Board, their initiatives, and asked for an update on the implementation progress of the Board's work.

PRESENTATIONS

1. 2026 Black Legacy Month Proclamation

Commissioner Whitesides read the Proclamation to Dr. No and Sean Palmer, YMI Executive Director. He stated that the Proclamation is in recognition of Black Legacy Month in Buncombe County for 2026 and that Black Legacy Month, a time to celebrate the rich and diverse cultures of Black and African American people, to raise awareness about our shared history, to recognize that truth must come before reconciliation, and to acknowledge the important contributions that Black and African American people have made to our community and our nation with a focus on education and cultural entrepreneurship.

PUBLIC HEARING

4. Public Hearing to Join the Commercial Property Assessed Capital Expenditure (C-PACE) Program

Jeremiah LeRoy provided the background information. He explained that The North Carolina Commercial Property Assessed Capital Expenditure (NC C-PACE) Program is a statewide, financing mechanism for commercial property owners to fund energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy, and resiliency improvements. The financing comes from private lenders and is repaid through a special assessment on the property tax bill over a long term. The program is administered by the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. The goal of a low-cost, long-term financing option for qualifying building improvements, is to promote economic development, reduce utility costs, and enhance building resilience. Participation by local governments is voluntary and requires adoption of a Resolution of Intent, which was adopted at the January 20 meeting.

Commissioner Sloan noted that this is a great public program and encouraged staff to get the word out.

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The Chair opened the Public Hearing at 6:19 p.m. There was one public comment from Amy Kelly, downtown owner, who thanked the Board for considering this program and noted that this program is a lifeline which will provide opportunities for her business to recover. The Chair closed the Public Hearing at 6:22 p.m.

Commissioner Sloan made the motion to adopt the resolution to participate in the NC C-PACE program. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moore and carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Resolutions Authorizing the County manager to submit applications to the N.C. Department of Commerce, Rural Division's Small Business Infrastructure Grant Program in support of the Swannanoa Sidewalks project

E.B Odderstol, Economic Development Program Analyst, provided background information. She explained that the proposed resolutions would be to support Buncombe County applications to the North Carolina Department of Commerce Small Business Infrastructure Grant. The purpose of these applications is to support the Swannanoa Sidewalks project, which will repair and extend sidewalks in Beacon Village as part of Hurricane Helene recovery efforts. If approved, the resolution will authorize Buncombe County to proceed with the grant application, and it will become effective upon adoption.

Commissioner Wells asked why only one sidewalk project was funded out of five applications and requested details on the SECA application. Odderstol explained that the initial grant prioritized storm-damaged infrastructure and that Commerce staff decided the best use of funds was for funding for Beacon Village repairs. She further explained that the second application aims to extend sidewalks along Railroad Street and complete the area's pedestrian grid.

Commissioner Wells made the motion to approve both projects. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ball and carried unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

1. Historic Resources Commission –Commissioner Whitesides made the motion to reappoint Robert Owens. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sloan and carried unanimously.
2. Strategic Partnership Grants Committee –The Board discussed holding interviews on February 17 at 2:00 p.m.
3. Home and Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee – Commissioner Wells made the motion to reappointment of Daniel Beerman, Susan Schiemer, and Melissa Harmon. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Whitesides and carried unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION

Curt Euler, County Attorney, provided the reasoning to go into closed session to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged to consider and give instructions concerning the handling of a lawsuit in Federal District Court, Western District of North Carolina titled Horton et al v. Buncombe County, 1:26-cv-0035. He stated that there will be no formal action taken at this time and that the statutory authority is contained in G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3).

Commissioner Horton requested to recuse herself from participation due to conflict of interest. Commissioner Whitesides made the motion to recuse Commissioner Horton, and it was seconded by Commissioner Sloan and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moore made the motion to go into closed session for reasons stated. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ball and carried unanimously.

Adjourned at 6:35 p.m.