

MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'

BRIEFING MEETING OF MARCH 5, 2026.

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

Present: Chair Amanda Edwards; Commissioner Terri Wells, Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Parker Sloan; Commissioner Drew Ball.

Absent: Vice-Chair Martin Moore and Commissioner Jennifer Horton.

The following updates were reviewed and discussed:

1. 2026 Limited Obligation Bonds

Melissa Moore, Finance Director, provided an update on the planned 2026 Limited Obligation Bonds (LOBs) issuance, including projected cost-of-capital impacts on the General Fund. The presentation outlined upcoming debt issuances, including \$62 million in FY26 LOBs, \$36 million in FY26 general obligation bonds, and additional LOB and GO issuances planned for FY28. The Board was informed that the not-to-exceed amount for the 2026 LOBs issuance was set at \$145 million, which included \$47 million in reimbursements and actions related to the 2015 and 2026 Deeds of Trust. Project allocations were detailed for Buncombe County Schools, Asheville City Schools, and County facilities, along with closing costs and refunding components. Reimbursement items were also identified across schools and County projects. The presentation showed current and projected outstanding debt levels and confirmed that both the County's existing and new debt remained well within state and local debt capacity limits. The Board was also briefed on the timeline for required approvals, including the introduction and consideration of issuance resolutions and a public hearing scheduled for March 17, followed by final consideration on April 21.

2. Comprehensive Plan Update

Nathan Pennington, Planning Director and Gillian Philips, Long Ranger Planner, provided the update including recent zoning map activity, text amendments, and implementation planning. The Buncombe 2043 Comprehensive Plan, adopted in May 2023 as the County's first full comprehensive plan, established long-term vision themes, policies, and a Future Land Use Map used to guide growth and regulatory decisions. Staff reported that four rezoning cases in 2025 resulted in changes to the Future Land Use Map, while all 2026 rezoning requests aligned with the existing map and required no changes. The presentation reviewed both pre-storm and post-storm text amendment priorities, including topics such as mixed-use development, transportation, affordable housing, environmental standards, and unified code updates. Staff also summarized the impacts of the 2024 North Carolina Disaster Recovery Act, which restricted local governments' ability to down-zone property without unanimous owner consent, creating uncertainty and legal risks for certain zoning changes. Approved and upcoming amendments were outlined, including the end of mandatory single-family zoning and planned

Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2026

revisions to the Flood Damage Prevention and E-911 Addressing Ordinances. They also highlighted progress on the Swannanoa Small Area Plan and identified next steps, including its anticipated adoption in September 2026 and continued work on ordinance revisions and policy dashboards.

MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'

REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 5, 2026.

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met to hold a Regular Meeting on March 5, 2026, in the 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 Parker Sloan; Commissioner Drew Ball.

Absent: Commissioner Jennifer Horton

The Chair opened the meeting and provided opening remarks.

CONSENT

1. Approval of the February 17, 2026 Combined Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of the January 2026 Tax Collection Report
3. Request to waive occupancy tax penalty for Brian Bishop, owner of Legacy Vacation Homes
4. Approval of the Construction Manager at Risk Contract for the Hall Fletcher Renovation Project

Commissioner Moore made the motion to approve the consent agenda and agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Whitesides and approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kenneth Buckner- provided more information related to his complaint with the Sheriff's Office.

Gino Perez – requested the Board intervene and fix the ride voucher program, noting that it is too hard to redeem the vouchers for rides and suggested the County restructure the program.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Fair Chance Hiring Week Proclamation

Commissioner Ball read the proclamation. He explained that Fair Chance Hiring Week encourages employers, workforce development agencies, community organizations, and citizens to recognize the value and potential that formerly incarcerated individuals bring to our workforce. Let's work together to create a more inclusive economy that offers opportunities for all members of our community to contribute, thrive, and succeed.

2. Severe Weather Preparedness Week Proclamation

Commissioner Sloan read the proclamation. He explained that it is Severe Weather Preparedness Week, and call upon our residents to observe the week with appropriate activities that promote awareness of severe weather and how to stay safe.

3. Board of Equalization Annual Report

Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2026

Randall Barnett the Board of Equalization Chair provided the annual report. He outlined current membership and its role as a quasi-judicial body that hears and decides formal property assessment appeals. The Board, originally established in 1985, was fully reappointed in December 2024 and completed state-required training in January 2025. Over the past year, the Board held 11 regular meetings and heard 12 appeal cases. It also adopted its first comprehensive set of bylaws in June 2025, establishing operational procedures and member expectations. Looking ahead, the Board anticipates a significant increase in appeals due to the 2026 countywide reappraisal. Planned goals include continued member training, collaboration with the NC Department of Revenue and UNC School of Government and working with the Tax Department to improve appeal management processes. The Board also noted that the deadline for property owners to file appeals is May 5, with hearings scheduled regularly thereafter.

NEW BUSINESS

Mason Scott and Bill Christy, Audit Committee Chair, provided background information. Christy explained that between October and December 2025, the Audit Committee completed a solicitation process for firms providing internal audit services. In December, the Committee interviewed the top three respondents to the request for proposals. The Audit Committee has selected Cherry Bekaert and recommends this firm to the Board of Commissioners to provide contracted internal audit services for an initial three-year term. Cherry Bekaert is expected to complete 3–4 internal audits per year based on an audit risk assessment and audit plan developed in partnership with County stakeholders. The firm may also perform additional or specialized audits (e.g., technology audits), as needed. The cost per audit is anticipated not to exceed \$50,000, dependent on scope and complexity.

In addition, the Audit Committee recommends revisions to the Audit Charter to 1) maintain reporting and oversight of the internal audit services firm with the Committee and 2) adopt the "Green Book" internal controls framework to better align with governmental standards for control over operations, reporting, and compliance.

Commissioner Sloan made the motion to adopt the attached resolution that 1) adopts the Green Book internal controls framework; 2) adopt the revised Audit Charter, and 3) authorize the County Manager to execute a Master Services Agreement with Cherry Bekaert for provision of internal audit services. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moore and carried unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Environmental & Energy Stewardship Subcommittee – Commissioner Whitesides made a motion to reappoint Commissioner Wells and Commissioner Sloan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ball and carried unanimously.

Parks, Greenways & Recreation and Advisory Board - Commissioner Wells made a motion to reappoint David Burdette to the board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ball and carried unanimously.

Adjourned at 5:55 p.m.