

FY2026-27 Budget Adoption

June 15, 2026

To the Catawba County Board of Commissioners and Citizens:

I am pleased to present to you a balanced Catawba County Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget. On May 11, 2026, I presented my recommended budget, which supported significant investments to sustain core services and economic vitality within the existing property tax rate. It also included a proposed 2.5-cent increase dedicated to school construction. The Board heard budget presentations from departments, schools, and outside agencies on May 22, 2026, and held a Public Hearing and additional Board discussions on May 26, 2026.

During deliberations, the Board directed me to prepare a budget without a property tax increase that still accomplishes the objective of funding the top priority in critical school construction. This directive resulted in the following changes to my recommended budget:

- *Maintain current \$0.3985 property tax rate* – Decrease recommended property tax rate by 2.5 cents, which reduces total budget by \$16.2 million and General Fund budget by \$8.1 million;
- *Social Services Senior Nutrition* – Reduce General Fund support allocated to Senior Nutrition Meals on Wheels program, replacing funds with local donation revenue to maintain current service levels; and
- *Employee compensation* – Eliminate proposed top performer pay of \$500, which reduces total budget by \$367,169 and General Fund budget by \$300,000.

These adjustments position Catawba County to support \$120 million in middle school expansion needs within the existing tax rate. This is a responsible first step towards addressing school facility priorities. While the current rate supports the middle school project, future project capacity will be severely limited without some combination of tax rate increase, expense reduction, and project refinement.

Other budget adjustments from my recommended budget included the following:

- *Arts Culture Catawba* – decrease recommended per capita funding allocation from \$1.05 per capita to \$1 per capita, as directed by the Board;
- *Social Services special contingency* – reduced budgeted revenue and expense by \$700,000, based on historic utilization; and
- *911 Consoles* – reduce restricted 911 Fund revenue and expenditures by \$415,000 due to a shift in project timing.

With these changes, the final General Fund budget is \$264,135,191, and the total budget is \$353,319,157.

Sincerely,



Mary Furtado
County Manager