

Minutes
Catawba County Board of Commissioners
Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 8:00 a.m.

Budget

Budget Hearings with Departments, Schools and Outside Agencies.

The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. in the Board of Commissioners Meeting Room, Catawba County Justice Center, 100 Government Drive, Newton, NC. The purpose of the special meeting was for budget hearings for County departments, schools and outside agencies for Fiscal Year 2025/26.

Present were Chair Randy Isenhower, Vice-Chair Austin Allran, and Commissioners Robert C. Abernethy, Jr., Barbara G. Beatty and Cole Setzer.

Absent: None

A quorum was present.

Also present were County Manager Mary Furtado, Assistant County Manager Paul Murray, and Assistant County Manager Justin Merritt.

1. Chair Isenhower called the special meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
2. Budget Hearings:

The following departments presented their proposed budgets for Fiscal Year 2025/26:

- a. Catawba Valley Community College
- b. Catawba County Schools
- c. Hickory City Schools
- d. Newton-Conover City Schools
- e. Catawba Valley Medical Center
- f. Public Health
- g. Sheriff
- h. Emergency Services/ Communications Center/ Fire Districts
- i. Utilities & Engineering / Water & Sewer / Solid Waste
Director of Utilities and Engineering Peter Shonka requested the Board of Commissioners adopt a resolution accepting State awarded funds from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality of \$19,700,000.

On January 21, 2025, the Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution approving the submittal of requests for funding of a \$20,000,000 Legislative appropriation. The appropriation was approved by the North Carolina General Assembly in Session Law 2023-134 and subsequently amended by Session Law 2024-1. The Session Law stipulates the appropriation be used for water or wastewater projects.

As required in the Session Law, 1.5% of the appropriation or \$300,000 is to be withheld by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) for administrative costs. The remaining \$19,700,000 has been approved for utilization for the following projects:

1. Brown Chapel and Mollys Backbone Wastewater Pump Station Upgrades, estimated to cost \$3,500,000.
2. New Village Center Wastewater Pump Station Construction and Sherrills Ford Wastewater Pump Station Upgrades, estimated to cost \$7,700,000.

3. The Buffalo Shoals Road 16-inch Waterline Construction, estimated to cost \$8,500,000.

The County has received Letters of Intent to Fund and Funding Offers from NCDEQ. A requirement of the Funding Offers is the adoption of a resolution to accept the funds.

Staff has continued to move forward with project design, preparation of easement and property acquisition documents, and compliance with the NCDEQ bureaucracy required to utilize the legislative appropriation.

Commissioner Robert C. Abernethy, Jr., made a motion to adopt a resolution accepting State awarded funds from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality of \$19,700,000. The motion unanimously carried.

The following resolution applies:

RESOLUTION No. 2025-19

RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT STATE AWARDED FUNDS FROM NC DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY FOR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

WHEREAS, Catawba County has received a Directed Projects grant from the 2023 Appropriations Act, Session Law 2023-134, administered through the Drinking Water Reserve and Wastewater Reserve to assist eligible units of government with meeting their water/wastewater infrastructure needs, and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality has offered 2023 Appropriations Act funding in the amounts of \$8,500,000 for the Buffalo Shoals Waterline, \$3,500,000 for Brown Chapel Rd and Mollys Backbone Road Pump Station Upgrade, and \$7,700,000 for Village Center and Sherrills Ford Elementary Pump Station Improvements, and

WHEREAS, Catawba County intends to perform Division of Water Infrastructure projects in accordance with the agreed upon scope of work.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners, that:

1. Catawba County does hereby accept the 2023 Appropriations Act Directed Projects Grants offers of \$8,500,000, \$3,500,000 and \$7,700,000.
2. Catawba County does hereby give assurance to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality that any Conditions or Assurances contained in the Award Offer will be adhered to.
3. Authorize the County Manager to furnish such information as the appropriate State agency may request in connection with this project; to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required by the Division of Water Infrastructure.
4. This resolution is effective upon its adoption.

Adopted the 21st day of May, 2025.


- j. Planning & Development
- k. Parks
- l. Facilities
- m. Technology
- n. Elections
- o. Register of Deeds
- p. Court Services (Repay)
- q. Conflict Resolution Center
- r. United Arts Council
- s. Salt Block
- t. Historical Association
- u. Hickory Public Libraries

- v. Cooperative Extension
- w. Soil & Water
- x. Finance
- y. Tax
- z. Partners HM
- aa. Convention & Visitors Bureau
- bb. Economic Development Corporation
- cc. Social Services
- dd. Library
- ee. Human Resources

3. Debrief and Question and Answers with staff. During the debrief with staff, Commissioners requested the following budget items be brought forward for additional discussion and deliberation during the Public Hearing scheduled for Thursday, May 22nd:
 - a. Chromebook funding for the local school systems
 - b. Newton-Conover High School Phase II
 - c. Solid Waste Treatment & Grinding Processing Facility
 - d. All fire tax rate increases recommended by the County Manager
4. Adjournment. No further action was taken. Upon a motion by Commissioner Barbara G. Beatty which unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.



Randy Isenhower, Chair
Board of Commissioners



Dale R. Stiles, County Clerk

