

Regular Session, September 15, 2025, 7:00 p.m.  
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

**Appointments**

City of Claremont Planning Board – Todd Setzer	554	09/15/25
Jury Commission – Mitch Sigmon	554	09/15/25

**Emergency Services**

Sherrills Ford/Terrell Property Purchase	554	09/15/25
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**Finance**

Sherrills Ford/Terrell Property Purchase	554	09/15/25
Hickory City Schools: Hickory High School Funding Appropriation	555	09/15/25

**Presentations**

Proclamation Declaring September 15 <sup>th</sup> -October 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2025, as Hispanic Heritage Month	554	09/15/25
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**Proclamations**

Proclamation Declaring September 15 <sup>th</sup> -October 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2025, as Hispanic Heritage Month	554	09/15/25
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**Public Comment**

Kenyon Kelly	554	09/15/25
Michael McRee	554	09/15/25
Sherrill Watkins	554	09/15/25
Kevin Killian	554	09/15/25

**Sheriff's Office**

Declare Service Weapon and Badge as Surplus for Retiring Sheriff Major Nathan Fisher	554	09/15/25
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**Tax**

August Tax Refunds, Releases and Adjustments	555	09/15/25
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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, September 15, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., in the Board of Commissioners Meeting Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Catawba County Justice Center, 100 Government Drive, Newton, North Carolina.

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

Also present were County Manager Mary S. Furtado, Assistant County Manager Paul Murray, Assistant County Manager Justin Merritt, County Attorney Jodi Stewart, Assistant County Attorney Josh Teague, and County Clerk Dale Stiles.

1. Chair Randy Isenhower called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., noting a quorum was present.
2. Commissioner Cole Setzer led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Commissioner Barbara G. Beatty offered the invocation.
4. Commissioner Robert C. Abernethy, Jr., made a motion to approve the Minutes from the Board's Regular Meeting of September 2, 2025. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Recognition of Special Guests:

Chair Isenhower welcomed everyone present.

6. Public Comments.

Kenyon Kelley came forward and spoke in favor of relocating the monument at the Old 1924 Courthouse in Newton, racial profiling and immigration policy. Michael McRee came forward and spoke about insurrection, The Catawba Soldier of the Civil War, and upkeep of the grounds of the Old 1924 Courthouse. Sherrill Watkins came forward in opposition of the comments of the first speaker. Kevin Killian with VFW Post 5305 came forward and spoke on behalf of Veterans and support provided by the VFW.

7. Appointments.

Upon a recommendation by Commissioner Abernethy, that came in the form of a motion which unanimously carried, the Board reappointed Todd Setzer for a fifth term to the City of Claremont Planning Board and Board of Adjustment, with a term expiration of October 31, 2028.

Upon a recommendation by Commissioner Setzer, that came in the form of a motion which unanimously carried, the Board reappointed Mitch Sigmon for a 4<sup>th</sup> term to the Jury Commission, with a term expiration of June 30, 2027.

8. Presentations.

Commissioner Setzer presented a Proclamation Declaring September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, through October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, as Hispanic Heritage Month to Centro Latino Program Coordinator Soraya Valdez Place.

9. Consent Agenda.

County Manager Mary Furtado presented the following three items under the consent agenda. Chair Isenhower asked if any commissioner wished for an item to be broken out of the consent agenda for individual consideration. None was requested.

**a.** Staff requested the Board of Commissioners authorize the acquisition of 0.183 acres located at 4011 Slanting Bridge Road from Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire & Rescue, Inc. in the amount of \$51,926.33.

In Southeastern Catawba County (SECC), sewer service is provided by pumping wastewater through a series of sewage lift stations to the Hickory-Catawba Wastewater Treatment Plant located in Catawba. Development patterns in the SECC area necessitate investments in upgrading several lift stations to increase pumping capacity. These investments have been long-planned and are necessary to continue ensuring sufficient capacity is available throughout the system.

Projects are currently underway to upgrade lift stations at Village Center, Sherrills Ford Elementary School, Molly's Backbone Road, and Brown Chapel Road, authorized by the BOC in March 2024. The Village Center Lift Station project included engineering analysis that determined upgrading the current station to pump the required flows is not practical based on-site elevations relative to the rest of the sewer system. After extensive study, it has been determined the best solution is to construct a new lift station on Slanting Bridge Road to handle flows coming from the west. This new lift station will work in conjunction with an altered design for the current Village Center lift station to more efficiently manage flows in the area.

Sherrills Ford -Terrell Fire & Rescue has agreed to sell the County 0.183 acres of land in the southwest corner of its Slanting Bridge Road fire station location (map attached) for the prorated assessed tax value in the amount of \$51,926.33. Funds are available in the existing Village Center / Sherrills Ford Pump Station Upgrades capital project to support this purchase; no appropriation is required.

**b.** Staff requested the Board of Commissioners declare Major Nathan Fisher's badge and weapon surplus effective September 15, 2025, pursuant to North Carolina Statute 20-187.2(a).

Major Nathan Fisher is retiring effective November 1, 2025, and has requested his badge and service weapon. In lieu of receiving these items at a Board of Commissioners meeting, he has asked that the weapon and badge be presented at a later date.

c. Staff requested the Board of Commissioners approve 74 releases totaling \$159,568.14, 29 refunds totaling \$90,534.06, and 81 Motor Vehicles Bill adjustments / refunds totaling \$7,067.66 requested during the month of August.

North Carolina General Statute 105-381(b) states upon receipt of a taxpayer's written request for release or refund, the taxing unit's governing body has 90 days to determine whether the taxpayer's request is valid to either approve the release or refund of the incorrect portion or to notify the taxpayer in writing that no release or refund will be made.

During the month of August Tax Office staff have checked records and verified the legitimacy of 74 releases totaling \$159,568.14, 29 refunds totaling \$90,534.06, and 81 Motor Vehicle Bill adjustments / refunds totaling \$7,067.66.

Common reasons for the release of tax bill amounts include change in values, months, and situs, businesses closing / being sold, clerical errors, removal of personal property and elderly exclusion reinstatements. The refunds are due mainly to adjustments needed to correct depreciation schedules for business equipment and cell towers as directed by NCDOR. The motor vehicle bill adjustments are largely due to proration of tax bill amounts to account for mid-year transfers of ownership and change in values and situs.

The consent agenda items came in the form of a motion by Chair Isenhower, which carried unanimously.

10. Other Items of Business. None.

11. Manager's Report.

Staff requested the Board of Commissioners appropriate \$18 million to the Hickory High School Renovations capital project and transfer \$3 million in previously appropriated funds from the existing System-Wide Classroom Renovations project to the Hickory High School Renovations project.

As the Board of Commissioners is aware, advancing the planned renovation or reconstruction of Hickory High School has long been the top priority of Hickory City Schools' (HCS) Board of Education. To date, the Board of Commissioners has appropriated \$4.9 million in support of this priority. In June 2025, HCS selected architecture and engineering firm LS3P to create a plan for Hickory High School and is now ready to award the design contract to keep the project moving. Additionally, HCS will soon be submitting a substantial grant request to North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Needs-Based Public Schools Construction Fund for the high school project. Through this program, the maximum state funding award for high school projects is \$62 million. Based on Catawba County's designation as a Tier 2 county, this grant application requires a 25% local funding match from the Board of Commissioners, which amounts to \$15.5 million.

Every four years, in concert with the property revaluation cycle, Catawba County establishes a schools construction funding plan to guide allocation decisions for the duration of that cycle. As part of this multi-year plan, Hickory High School is scheduled to receive \$18 million in funds in FY2026/27. However, given HCS's readiness to move forward with design, staff recommend appropriating the planned funding now rather than waiting until the budget process to avoid unnecessary delays in progress.

Further, the Board of Commissioners appropriated \$3 million to a System-Wide Classroom Renovations project in FY21 for which no specific plans exist today. Staff recommend transferring this existing funding into the Hickory High School Renovations project in support of the Board of Education's highest project priority. If approved, these actions would create total project appropriations of \$25.9 million, for which Catawba County intends on issuing debt at some point in the future. This planned structured debt can be supported within the existing tax rate and does not require a tax rate increase. If this action is approved, pursuant to authority delegated to the Chief Financial Officer by the Board, a declaration of official intent to reimburse expenditures, which expressly declares Catawba County's intent to reimburse itself for project expenditures from the planned debt proceeds will be prepared, to maintain compliance with US Treasury regulations.

Supplemental Appropriation:

*Revenue:*

423-740100-690450	Proceeds – Installment Purchase	\$18,000.000
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*Expense:*

423-740100-865200- 32104-3-19	Hickory High School Renovations	\$18,000,000
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Transfer:

*From:*

423-740100-865200- 32150-3-24	System-wide Classroom Renovations	\$ 3,000,000
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*To:*

423-740100-865200- 32104-3-19	Hickory High School Renovations	\$ 3,000,000
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Vice-Chair Austin Allran made a motion to appropriate \$18 million to Hickory High School Renovations capital project and transfer \$3 million in previously appropriated funds from the existing System-Wide Classroom Renovations project to the Hickory High School Renovations project. The motion carried unanimously.

12. Attorney's Report. None.
13. Adjournment. No further action was taken. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beatty which unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.



Randy Isenhower, Chair  
Catawba County Board of Commissioners



Dale R. Stiles  
County Clerk