

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Cabarrus met for an Agenda Work Session in the Multipurpose Room at the Cabarrus County Governmental Center in Concord, North Carolina at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 1, 2025.

Public access to the meeting could also be obtained through the following means:

live broadcast at 5:00 p.m. on Channel 22
<https://www.youtube.com/cabarruscounty>
<https://www.cabarruscounty.us/cabcotv>

Present - Chairman:	Jeff Jones
Vice Chairman:	Laura B. Lindsey
Commissioners:	Larry G. Pittman
	Kenneth M. Wortman

Also present were: Kelly Sifford, Interim County Manager; Aalece Pugh, Assistant County Manager; Kyle Bilafer, Assistant County Manager; Doug Hall, County Attorney and Ariadne Olvera, Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Jones recognized Mr. Ian Patrick, candidate to fill the vacancy left by Commissioner Shue.

1. Call to Order

Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Work Session Agenda

UPON MOTION of Vice Chair Lindsey, seconded by Commissioner Wortman and unanimously carried, the Board approved the agenda as presented.

3. Discussion Items - No Action

3.1. County Manager - Cabarrus County Schools Mid-Year Financial Position Presentation

Phillip Penn, Chief Financial Officer, Cabarrus County Schools, presented a PowerPoint on the Mid-Year Financial Update, providing the following information:

Fiscal Year 2025-26 Overview

- The 2024-25 fiscal year ended with a minimal fund balance, leaving little margin for error in 2025-26; rebuilding to a 4% fund balance is a key focus.
- Positives include fines and forfeiture revenue trending closer to historical levels, resilient interest rates on deposited funds, expenses tracking close to projections, and a newly introduced monthly Board of Education budget report providing greater transparency.

Fiscal Year 2025-26 Challenges and Budget Impacts

- Negatives / Key Challenges:
 - No state budget yet, creating stress on personnel due to rising State Health Plan costs and uncertainty for 2026-27 planning.
 - Unexpected change in state transportation funding methodology, partially offset by budget freezes.
 - Continued growth in exceptional children (EC) population, requiring costly contracted services due to lack of in-house providers (Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy /audiologist/Speech Language Pathologists).
 - No Medicaid reimbursement received yet; \$950,000 budgeted of \$2 million owed.
- Delayed State Budget - Implications:
 - Last pay raises were in July 2024; inflation has risen >4% since then.
 - State Health Plan premiums and out-of-pocket costs have increased significantly, making recruitment and retention challenging.
 - Salary growth projections are uncertain; compounded effects of raises are difficult to predict, possibly requiring special appropriations if raises exceed 3%.
- Delayed Federal Budget - Outcome:
 - Minimal financial impact, as primary federal grants were already received.
 - School Nutrition Program (SNP) remains financially strong with sufficient cash reserves to operate without immediate federal reimbursements.
 - Monitoring ongoing developments with the U.S. Department of Education; process to restart at the end of January.

2026-2027 Budget - Key Factors and Mitigation

- Key Factors:
 - State budget decisions on salaries and benefits.
 - Continued growth and higher concentration of needs in the exceptional children (EC) population.
 - Expected increased costs for routine facility maintenance (custodial supplies, mowing, painting).
 - Approved utility rate increases.
- Cost Mitigation Strategies:
 - Review of Program Choice.
 - Increased use of Cabarrus Virtual Academy vs. state-run NCVPS.
 - Refinement of position allotment model.
 - Greater use of cooperative purchasing, alternative sourcing, and RFPs.
 - Re-evaluating 'buy vs. build' decisions with vendors.
 - Exploring alternative models to reduce 1:1 technology deployment costs.
- Summary / Outlook:
 - Focus on maintaining correct staffing levels.
 - Expect higher utility and maintenance costs.
 - Potential delays in federal funding if USDE structure changes.
 - Capital requests to follow new hybrid prioritization process.

A discussion ensued. During discussion, Mr. Penn responded to questions from the Board. Kelly Sifford, Interim County Manager, provided information.

3.2. Facilities Design and Construction - Behavioral Healthcare Center Contract Credit

Michael Miller, Design and Construction Director, provided an update on the Behavioral Healthcare Center contract. He reported the contract with Messer Construction is expected to decrease by approximately \$4 million.

Further, when the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) was developed, the project included a bid contingency. Using a bid contingency allows the county to encumber funds for unforeseen costs that may arise during construction and also allows Messer to maintain their originally quoted fee. The original bid contingency was approximately \$3.3 million. After bid savings were realized, the contingency increased slightly to just over \$4 million.

All bids have now been received, and all subcontracts are in place. Mr. Miller stated that the full \$4 million contingency will likely not be needed for actual construction. The County has the option to take a credit from Messer or leave the funds in the contract for potential future construction needs. Existing owner's contingency and construction manager contingency funds within the GMP remain available to cover unexpected costs that arise.

There is a current need for \$500,000 for furniture. The original budget for furniture was \$1.2 million, but pricing returned at \$1.7 million. Mr. Miller's plans to request full credit from Messer for the bid contingency, use \$500,000 to cover the gap in furniture costs, and return the remaining funds to the construction account, leaving them unencumbered.

A brief discussion ensued.

3.3. Solid Waste / Landfill - Bid Award for Landfill Phase 5 Expansion

Kevin Grant, Environmental Management Director, provided an update on the Phase 5 Landfill Expansion Project. The expansion will add approximately 2 acres and require the movement of roughly 60,000 cubic yards of material, which will provide an estimated four years of additional airspace. The formal bid process was initiated on November 6, with bids opened on November 25. Several contractors submitted proposals, and the lowest responsible bid was submitted by Ike's Construction.

Mr. Grant noted the landfill is self-sufficient that operates under an enterprise fund, with fees collected through waste received at the landfill and convenience centers supporting operations. The landfill fund will cover the cost of the expansion, which was approved in the FY26 Capital Budget Plan.

Due to time constraints and the need to move forward quickly, he requested Board approval to approve the contract with Ike's Construction and begin construction as soon as possible

UPON MOTION of Vice Chair Lindsey, seconded by Commissioner Wortman and unanimously carried, the Board suspended the Rules of Procedure due to time constraints.

UPON MOTION of Vice Chair Lindsey, seconded by Commissioner Wortman and unanimously carried, the Board approved the contract between Cabarrus County and Ike's Construction, Inc. and authorized the County Manager to execute the contract on behalf of Cabarrus County, subject to review by the County Attorney.

4. Discussion Items For Action

4.1. Active Living and Parks - 2026 Fees and Charges and Policy

Byron Haigler, Active Living and Parks Director, provided an update on proposed changes to department fees and charges and the fees and charges policy. Policy changes include removing date restrictions for the two-night cabin and tent site requirement on Fridays and Saturdays, making the requirement year-round. Fee updates include standardizing full-day rental times for Camp T.N. Spencer Park indoor facilities (Helms & Propst) with adjusted fees, adding a \$50 Frank Liske Park Barn set-up fee, increasing Active Living Center personal training sessions from \$35 to \$40 per hour, and introducing a drop-in fitness class pass at the standard rate for Active Living Centers. The Active Living and Parks Commission reviewed and approved these changes at their November 20, 2025 meeting.

A discussion ensued. During discussion, Mr. Haigler responded to questions from the Board.

4.2. Boards and Committees - Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Coordinating Committee (TAC) and Transportation Advisory Committee (TCC) - Appointment

Susie Morris, Planning and Development Director, reported that there are two positions staffed by the County for the Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). She advised Phil Collins has traditionally served alongside her in these capacities and requested these appointments continue for the upcoming year.

Additionally, Ms. Morris advised the MPO appointments are one-year terms and are typically brought before the Board each December. Also, the Board will need to consider the TAC reappointment for the elected official representative for calendar year 2026.

It was requested that Phil Collins, Planning Supervisor, be appointed as the County's TCC representative, and Susie Morris, Planning and Development Director, be appointed as the alternate representative for 2026.

4.3. Boards and Committees - Human Services Advisory Board - Removal

Dr. Aalece Pugh, Assistant County Manager, advised Ms. Shannon Lancaster has requested to step down from the Human Services Advisory Board. Her last meeting will be on December 3rd, 2025. Dr. Pugh further advised staff will begin discussing potential replacements to fill the upcoming vacancy on the board.

4.4. Boards and Committees - Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee - Appointment

This item was continued to the December Regular Meeting.

4.5. Boards and Committees - Tourism Authority - Removal

This item was continued to the December Regular Meeting.

4.6. BOC - Resolution Establishing the Board of Commissioners' 2026 Meeting Schedule

This item was continued to the December Regular Meeting.

4.7. Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District - Authorization for Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District to Approve Grant Contract

Amy Cook, Resource Conservation Easement Specialist, reported last Fall the Soil and Water Conservation District applied for two conservation easement grants through the state. More than 100 applications were submitted statewide, and six were selected for funding; two of the grants were awarded to Cabarrus County.

Ms. Cook requested approval of the two grant contracts, along with the associated budget amendment. Additionally, there will be required matching

funds, which have already been included in their department's regular budget. Additional funds will be provided by the landowners and the federal government

4.8. Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District - Authorization for Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District to Approve Grant Contract

Amy Cook, Resource Conservation Easement Specialist Amy Cook, Resource Conservation Easement Specialist, reported last Fall the Soil and Water Conservation District applied for two conservation easement grants through the state. More than 100 applications were submitted statewide, and six were selected for funding; two of the grants were awarded to Cabarrus County.

Ms. Cook requested approval of the two grant contracts, along with the associated budget amendment. She advised the required matching funds have already been included in their department's regular budget. Additional funds will be provided by the landowners and the federal government

4.9. Cooperative Extension - Amendments to Chapter 32, Code of Ordinances, "Farmland Preservation"

Doug Hall, County Attorney and General Counsel, provided the Board with a draft of the updated ordinance. He explained the proposed updates strengthen the ordinance, making it more user-friendly and streamlining the application process. Many of the revisions are required by the 2021 Farm Act. He noted that Chapter 32 of the County ordinance has been in place since 2005, and the Farm Act (the enabling legislation at the state level) has been rewritten twice since then, in 2016 and 2021. The County will now be incorporating the changes mandated by the updated statutes.

Mr. Hall also reported state law requires all Voluntary Agricultural Districts to be mapped. The mapping project, led by Tracy LeCompte and Sarah Newman, in partnership with the County's GIS Department, is underway and functional on the GIS website, though not all parcels have been mapped yet. In addition, the updated ordinance establishes a streamlined process for situations in which a landowner with an easement passes away and heirs seek to amend or withdraw from the agreement.

Tracy LeCompte, Cooperative Extension Director, noted that many parcels currently in the program were part of the initial class finalized in 2006. Because these agreements span 10 years, a large number will come up for renewal in 2026. Staff wants to ensure that landowners who wish to re-enroll next year have clear and concise guidance.

Sarah Newman, Livestock and Field Crop Extension Agent, provided an overview of the Voluntary Agricultural District and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District programs. Both programs involve voluntary conservation easements initiated by landowners seeking farmland protection. The largest ordinance update clarifies how the death of a landowner affects an easement. Under an enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District agreement, participants commit to the program for a 10-year period, regardless of a landowner's death, and this clarification ensures consistency across all agreements. Additional updates to the ordinance reflect recent statewide legislative changes applicable to Cabarrus County.

4.10. County Manager - Burg Church Property

Kelly Sifford, Interim County Manager, advised approximately one year ago, the county entered into a lease agreement with Burg Church. The church has requested additional property. The county worked with the school system to confirm the property's availability, and the schools have approved the request. An independent appraisal was conducted, resulting in a value of \$119,200 for the property.

Doug Hall, County Attorney and General Counsel, explained Cabarrus County holds title to the property because it secures some of the school's financing. When the lease was originally approved, the understanding was that five years from now, upon lease expiration, there would be an option to purchase the property. By that time, the financing is expected to be fully paid, allowing for a conveyance without encumbrances. While the county holds title, the property has no other school use and is somewhat separated from the main school campus.

All parties are in agreement. Mr. Hall drafted a proposed addendum to the existing lease, which has been sent to Burg Church. The addendum clarifies the terms and specifies that no conveyance will occur until the property is fully paid.

Ms. Sifford noted that the addendum is structured to end at the same time as the original lease agreement.

4.11. DHS- Transportation 5310 Elderly and Handicap Budget Amendment

Charles Ratliff, Transportation Manager, and Suzanne Moose, HHS Business Director, reported the Transportation was awarded an additional \$72,964 from the 5310 City of Concord Elderly and Handicapped grant program. A budget amendment will be needed to recognize the additional revenue.

4.12. Risk and Safety - Annual Bond Approvals

Jon Bradley, Risk and Safety Director, provided information for the annual renewal of bonds for the following:

- o Finance Director and Deputy Finance Director (Jim Howden & Mitzi Odell) - \$1,000,000
- o Tax Administrator (David Thrift) - \$250,000
- o Cabarrus County Sheriff (Van Shaw) - \$25,000
- o Register of Deeds (Wayne Nixon) - \$50,000

5. Approval of Regular Meeting Agenda

5.1. BOC - Approval of Regular Meeting Agenda

UPON MOTION of Vice Chair Lindsey, seconded by Commissioner Pittman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the agenda as follows for the December 15, 2025 regular meeting.

Appointment and Swearing In

- BOC - Board of Commissioner Appointment and Swearing In

Board Organization

- Board of Commissioners - Election of Chairman
- Board of Commissioners - Election of Vice Chairman
- Board of Commissioners - Comments from Chairman and Vice Chairman

Recognitions and Presentations

- Proclamation - Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Recognition - Budget - Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award

Consent Agenda

- Active Living and Parks - 2026 Fees and Charges and Policy
- Boards and Committees - Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Coordinating Committee (TAC) and Transportation Advisory Committee (TCC) - Appointment
- Boards and Committees - Human Services Advisory Board - Removal
- Boards and Committees - Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee - Appointment
- Boards and Committees - Tourism Authority - Removal
- BOC - Resolution Establishing the Board of Commissioners' 2026 Meeting Schedule
- Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District - Authorization for Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District to Approve Grant Contract
- Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District - Authorization for Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District to Approve Grant Contract
- Cooperative Extension - Amendments to Chapter 32, Code of Ordinances, "Farmland Preservation"
- County Manager - Burg Church Property
- DHS- Transportation 5310 Elderly and Handicap Budget Amendment
- Risk and Safety - Annual Bond Approval - Deputy Finance Director
- Risk and Safety - Annual Bond Approval - Finance Director
- Risk and Safety - Annual Bond Approval - Register of Deeds
- Risk and Safety - Annual Bond Approval - Sheriff
- Risk and Safety - Annual Bond Approval - Tax Administrator
- Tax Administration - Refund and Release Reports - November 2025

New Business

- Budget - FY27 Budget Update

6. Closed Session - Consult with Attorney and Personnel

6.1 Closed Session

UPON MOTION of Commissioner Pittman, seconded by Vice Chair Lindsey and unanimously carried, the Board moved to go into closed session to consult with attorney and personnel as authorized by NCGS 143-138.11(a)(3).

7. Return to Open Session

UPON MOTION of Commissioner Pittman, seconded by Vice Chair Lindsey and unanimously carried, the Board moved to return to open session.

8. Adjourn

UPON MOTION of Commissioner Pittman, seconded by Vice Chair Lindsey, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.




Ariadne, Clerk to the Board