

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Cabarrus met for the 2nd Quarter Cabarrus Summit at the Frank Liske Park barn, Concord, North Carolina at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1st, 2026.

Present - Chairwoman: Laura Lindsey
Commissioner: Ian Patrick
Jeff Jones
Larry Pittman

Also present were Kelly Sifford, Interim County Manager; Aalece Pugh, Assistant County Manager; Kyle Bilafer, Assistant County Manager; Todd Shanley, Chief of Staff/Information Officer and Ariadne Olvera, Clerk to the Board.

Municipal representatives from Kannapolis, Harrisburg, Mount Pleasant, Midland, Concord and Locust were also present, along with representatives from Kannapolis City Schools and Cabarrus County Schools.

Chairwoman Laura Lindsey called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Welcome

Chairwoman Laura Lindsey welcomed municipal elected officials, city managers and other guests.

Introduction/Updates

Each mayor/municipal representative introduced themselves and their colleagues who were present with them, then provided an update on activities, initiatives, and developments within their respective municipalities.

Dinner & Networking/General Discussion

The Board took a dinner break around 6:38 p.m.

Presentation

Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Donna Carpenter, President and CEO of the Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau gave a presentation that included:

- Domestic and international visitors spent \$36.7 billion in North Carolina in 2024. North Carolina's visitor economy GDP represents 3.4% of North Carolina's economy. Source: Visit North Carolina
- Cabarrus ranks 13th in total visitor spending among NC's 100 counties. Cabarrus had the 11th highest visitor spending growth rate of the state's 100 counties (up 8.7% from 2023). Source: Visit North Carolina
- **Mission**
To Drive visitation to Cabarrus County to generate the maximum impact through hotel stays and visitor spending
- **Vision**
To continually grow and sustain a dynamic travel industry to become the number one economic force of Cabarrus County.

Legislation

- Government TDA created in 1989 (NC General Assembly)
- Cabarrus County levied Occupancy Tax on hotels
- 6% Occupancy Tax on hotel stays (state maximum)/No F&B Tax
- 100% to CVB as stated in the Legislation
- County retains 5% Administrative Fee & 5% Sports Development
- Used only to promote tourism related services, facilities, events activities or attractions (can't build a hotel)

Board of Directors

- Kelly Sifford Cabarrus County BOC/County Manger
- Devante Watkins Hampton Inn & Suites Concord/Charlotte Hotelier
- Kenny Wortman Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners At Large
- James Ross, Treasurer Concord Mills At Large
- Alison Paladino The Chamber At Large
- Melissa Ewart Hilton Garden Inn Charlotte/Concord Hotelier
- Steve Steinbacher, Chair Cabarrus Brewing Company

- Lloyd Payne, Secretary City of Concord At Large
- Matt Long Charlotte Motor Speedway Tourism Activist
- Jonah Ritter Embassy Suites Hotelier
- Vinay Patel SREE Hotel

John Mills, Executive Vice President, presented the following:

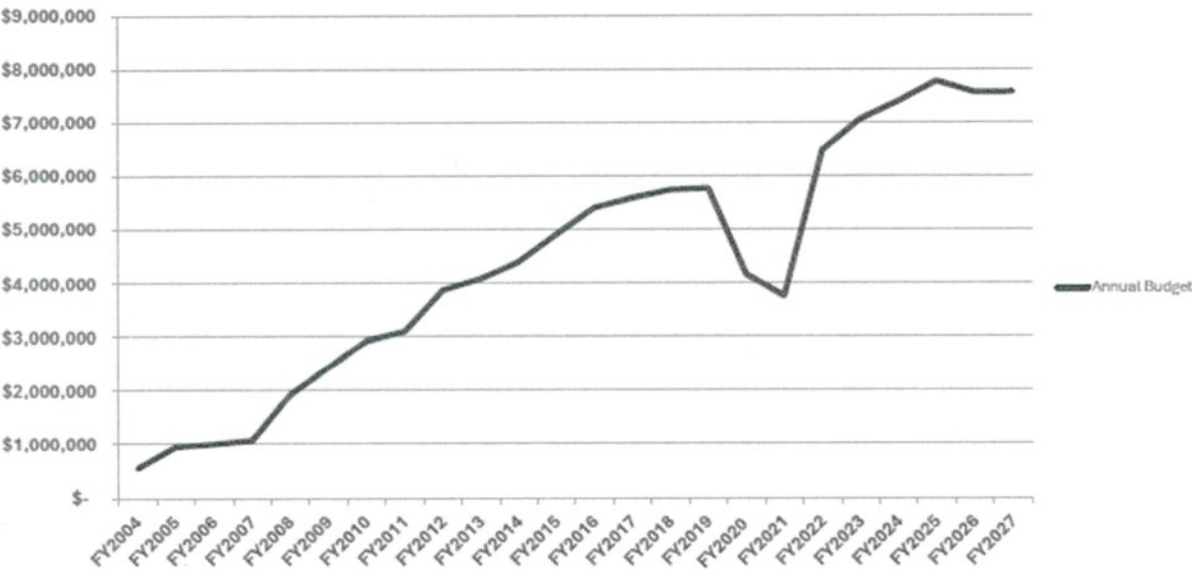
Visitors to Cabarrus County, NC by Travel Distance

- 50-249 Miles
52.8%
- 250-499 Miles
21.4%
- 500+ Miles
25.8%
- 2.0 Days Average Length of Stay
- 80.2% Overnight Stays
- 53.6% Repeat Visitors
- Raleigh, Atlanta and Greensboro

Media Economic Impact

- Total Impressions: 30.60M
- Influenced Visits: 68.69K
- Direct Influenced Visitor Spending: \$21.11M
- Direct, Indirect, & Induced Influenced Visitor Spending: \$29.28M
- FY25 Occupancy: Cabarrus 74.4% and North Carolina 62.8%
- FY Average Daily Rate: Cabarrus \$117.15 and North Carolina \$128.29
- FY25 Revenue Per Available Room: Cabarrus \$87.47 and North Carolina \$80.79

Cabarrus County CVB Budget Growth



Julie Hinson, Communications Director, gave a brief presentation on the following:

- A brief video of campaign 2025 and 2026 to encourage travel to Cabarrus County and achievements from 2024 and 2025 highlighting initiatives
- Cabarrus Burger Madness
2026: Record 25 participating restaurants
2025: More than 5,000 specialty burgers sold & passholders from 7 states with 2 checking in at every location!

John Poole, Senior Vice President Sales and Destination Services, gave a brief presentation on the following:

- **Corporate Meetings:**
22 events
22,000 Room Nights
\$13 Million in Economic Impact
- **Sports:**
13 events
4,000+ Room Nights
\$4 Million in Economic Impact
- **Track at JM Robinson High School:**
6 Events
2,000+ Room Nights
\$3 Million in Economic Impact
- **Foxtoberfest:**
7 Events
3,000 Room Nights
\$3.5 Million in Economic Impact
- **Association Executives of North Carolina**
340 Room Nights
\$200,000 in Economic Impact

Gayle Love Lee, Vice President of Partnership and Visitor Services, opened with a brief introduction, sharing that her mission is to ensure every visitor to Cabarrus County feels welcomed and well cared for. She explained that this is made possible through strong partnerships. She emphasized that building and nurturing these partnerships is the heart of her work and key to creating a memorable visitor experience.

Ms. Lee gave a brief presentation on the following:

- Concord Airport
- Charlotte Motor Speedway
- Visitors Center awarded the Travelers Choice Award
- 4 Premier Events
- Remote Activations
- Visitor Center
- Visit NC Partnership

Donna Carpenter, President and CEO, finished the presentation with the following:

What's Next

- Explore Cabarrus Strategic Plan
- Destination Next

GO Bonds

David Sturtz, Founder and CEO of Sturtz & Company, provided an overview of the process for pursuing a General Obligation (GO) Bond referendum. He explained the importance of collaboration between the county, school district, legal counsel, and financial advisors to ensure a successful bond initiative. His presentation outlined the legal framework, roles and responsibilities, and the roadmap for preparing a potential GO Bond referendum for the November ballot.

Closing

Chair Laura Lindsey thanked everyone for attending.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.


Ariadne Olvera, Clerk to the Board



