

Minutes

TOURISM BOARD

Regular meeting

5:30 p.m. April 14, 2025

Board Meeting Room of Town Hall Annex, 105 E. Corbin St.



Present: Chair Victoria Pace, Vice-Chair Megan Kimball, Rainbow Cabbage, Barney Caton, Commissioner Meaghun Darab (arrived at 5:47 p.m.), Scott Czechlewski, and Smita Patel.

Absent: Eryk Pruitt.

Staff: Planning and Economic Development Manager Shannan Campbell
Planning Technician Dakota Kimbrough

1. Call to order

Chair Victoria Pace called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

2. Agenda changes and approval

Shannan Campbell requested adding item 4d for reappointment of members Smita Patel, Scott Czechlewski, and Rainbow Cabbage.

Motion: Kimball moved to approve the agenda as amended. Czechlewski seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

Cabbage requested adding a discussion item about vultures under Board Comments as item 6b.

Motion: Cabbage moved to approve the agenda as amended. Czechlewski seconded.

Vote: 5-1. Kimball abstained.

3. Minutes review and approval

Minutes from regular meeting on March 3, 2023

Motion: Czechlewski moved to approve the minutes from March 3, 2025 as submitted. Patel seconded.

Vote: 5-1. Cabbage abstained.

4. Discussion/Action Items

A. Request from FlushFest organizers to roll grant funds from FY25 to FY26

Campbell explained that FlushFest organizers received a grant last year for use between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. Due to an organizer's illness, they want to postpone the event to fall 2025 and need board approval to roll the funds over to FY26.

Motion: Kimball moved to approve the rollover of funds to FY26. Cabbage seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

B. Contract Partner Responses/Budgets for FY26

1. Alliance for Historic Hillsborough (Visitors Center Operations/Services & Events)

101 E. Orange St., PO Box 429, Hillsborough, NC 27278
919-732-1270 | www.hillsboroughnc.gov | @HillsboroughGov
www.visithillsboroughnc.com | @HillsboroughNC

Amanda Boyd presented the Alliance's budget request. Key points included:

- A request to build a 16x20 ft storage shed between the farm office and public restrooms, to be shared with town partners. The estimated cost is \$15,000.
 - A new transportation services request of \$9,500 to provide shuttle buses for 4 large events, 3 Last Fridays, and 3 Saturdays in August for Uproar. This would use Carolina Livery's services.
 - An increase in the Last Fridays budget from \$23,500 to \$55,000 to cover staff time and support expanded programming.
 - Continuation of \$5,000 for the gallery/gift shop operations.
 - A cultural heritage tourism line item of \$10,000 to continue work started with the Occaneechi Band.
- Board members asked questions about shed ownership, transportation logistics, and budget increases. Amanda and Alliance board members provided additional context on fundraising efforts and organizational growth.

2. Burwell School Historic Site (Visitor Services)

Burwell School representatives presented their budget request, highlighting:

- No increase in funding requests, maintaining \$70,000.
- Plans for new programming including kids' camps and a community conversation series.
- New exhibits every 6 months.
- Recent successful fundraising gala.
- Organizational changes including new commissioners and future board recruitment.

3. Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce (Visitor Services & Events)

Czechlewski presented the Chamber's request, focusing on the Holiday Parade:

- No increase in funding requested.
- The parade had 90 entries and an estimated 11,000 attendees.
- Discussion about food vendors, with board members suggesting more local options.

4. Hillsborough Arts Council (Visitor Services & Events)

Heather Tatreau presented their request, including:

- Increase for Solstice Lantern Walk from \$10,000 to \$15,000 to expand to West Hillsborough.
- Increase for Last Fridays from \$23,500 to \$55,000 to cover staff time and expanded programming.
- Overview of organizational growth and transition to professional staffing.
- Discussion of fundraising efforts and plans for sustainability.

5. Orange County Historical Museum (Visitor Services)

Catie Atkinson presented the museum's request:

- 3.5% increase to \$58,000 for cost-of-living adjustments.
- Highlighted increased engagement, with visitors from 58 NC counties, 43 states, and 23 countries.
- New special exhibit on youth sports history.
- Upcoming program celebrating 250th anniversary of Third Provincial Congress.

C. Draft FY26 Budget - first look

Campbell presented an initial draft of the FY26 budget, noting:

- Projected revenues are flat, only up about \$6,000 halfway through the current fiscal year.
- Conservative revenue projection of \$485,000 for FY26.
- Potential deficit based on partner funding requests.
- Healthy fund balance of \$1,538,079 to potentially cover shortfalls.

Board members discussed the conservative revenue projections and potential strategies if revenues do not meet expectations.

D. Reappointment of Members

Shannan Campbell noted that Members Patel, Czechlewski, and Cabbage were up for reappointment. All three expressed a willingness to be reappointed.

5. Monthly reports & Staff updates

A. FY25 F&B Report (in-progress)

This item was not discussed separately as it was incorporated into the budget discussion.

6. Board comments & updates

A. Reflections from VISITNC365 Conference

Campbell and Cabbage shared insights from the conference, including:

- New marketing software tools.
- Partnerships with Visit NC for increased exposure.
- Presentation on Atlas Obscura and unique tourism experiences.
- Suggestion to participate in silent auctions at future conferences to promote Hillsborough.

B. Vulture Discussion

Board members discussed the vulture situation in Hillsborough:

- Some suggested potential tourism opportunities related to the vultures.
- Others expressed concerns about promoting an unnatural population increase.
- The board generally agreed not to take an official position on the matter.

7. Adjournment

Motion: Kimball moved to adjourn at 7:52 p.m. Czechlewski seconded.

Vote: 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dakotah Kimbrough
Planning Technician
Staff support to the Hillsborough Tourism Board

Approved: May 5, 2025