

Agenda

Tourism Board Regular Meeting

5:30 PM March 3, 2025

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



1. **Call to order**
2. **Agenda changes and approval**
4. **Discussion/Action Items**
 - A. FY 2026 (Spring 2025) draft grant schedule
 - B. Contract Scopes of Work for FY26
 - Alliance (Visitors Center)
 - Burwell School (Visitor Services)
 - Hillsborough Arts Council (Last Fridays, Handmade Parade, Solstice Lantern Walk)
 - Chamber (Holiday Tree Lighting & Holiday Parade)
 - Museum (Visitor Services)
5. **Monthly reports and Staff updates**
 - A. FY25 F&B Report (in-progress)
 - B. Alexander Dickson House
 - C. America 250 celebrations/events and potential partnership with the Town Board
6. **Board comments and updates**
7. **Adjournment**

Interpreter services or special sound equipment for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act is available on request. If you are disabled and need assistance with reasonable accommodations, call the Town Clerk's Office at 919-296-9443 a minimum of one business day in advance of the meeting.

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www.visithillsboroughnc.com | @HillsboroughNC



STAFF REPORT
Hillsborough Tourism Board

March 3, 2025

PRESENTER/INFORMATION CONTACT

Tourism Program Manager, Shannan Campbell

ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED

Subject: Tourism Board Grant Cycle Schedule

Attachments:

1. Draft grant cycle schedule

Background:

The Tourism Board opens a competitive grant process in the Spring for the following fiscal year for projects, programs, events that are proposed to grow tourism.

Summary, key points, and questions:

- N/A

Staff recommendation and comments:

Staff needs direction on the draft schedule and if the Tourism Board finds it acceptable.



Proposed FY 2026 Grant Cycle Schedule

Open Grant Cycle: Monday March 10, 2025 at 8am

Open for 5 weeks

Grants DUE: Friday April 18, 2025 at 5pm

Board Member Online Scoring: April 23-May 2, 2024 (1.5 week)

Top Scoring Grants Reviewed & Discussed: May 5, 2025 at 5:30pm (Regular Tourism Board Meeting)

Final FY26 Budget Adoption (to include grant awards): **Monday June 2, 2025 5:30 pm**



STAFF REPORT
Hillsborough Tourism Board

March 3, 2025

PRESENTER/INFORMATION CONTACT

Tourism Program Manager, Shannan Campbell

ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED

Subject: Tourism Board Contract Scopes for FY26

Attachments:

1. Alliance Scope of Work (Visitors Center & Visitors Services)
2. Burwell School Scope of Work (Operations, Events, & Visitors Services)
3. Chamber Scope of Work (Events & Visitor Services)
4. HAC Scope of Work (Events & Visitor Services)
5. OC Museum Scope of Work (Operations, Events, & Visitors Services)

Background:

In 2015 the Tourism Board moved from having only one method of funding (grants) to having three methods of funding (grants, contracts, special projects/partnerships) in order to fund different kind of projects/programs/and operations that supported the overall tourism program. The Tourism Board identified that it was asked, from what are now contract partners, for roughly the same amounts of money year over year for the same projects/programs/operations year over year.

The board identified that it wanted a structured traditional competitive grant program for new/innovative ideas to start new events or projects as well as a way to be nimble and fund smaller asks that pop up through the year (special projects/partnerships). They also determined that asking the historic sites and the Alliance to apply for a competitive grant program every year was not the most effective and that these relationships should transition to contracts for tourism services.

The Tourism Board has been perfecting all three of these funding processes over the years to see what works, what doesn't, and what kind of questions and reporting should be provided in order to ensure that the tourism funds are being spent effectively to grow tourism in town.

Summary, key points, and questions:

- Two years ago the Tourism Board contracted with the Hillsborough Arts Council to expand their contract to paying for some additional staffing and misc costs of the Gallery and Giftshop (\$5,000). Last year HAC asked for this again and it was funded. Does the board want to include

this in the scope or wait and see if the HAC asks for this support again and have that conversation with them at the next meeting during contract presentations?

- Last year the HAC asked for continued support for Solstice Lantern Walk (\$10,000). Does the board want to include this in the scope or wait and see if the HAC asks for this support again and have that conversation in the next meeting during contract presentations?
- Last year was the first year that the Tourism Board contracted with the Chamber for the Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting and it was decided to split these events due to size and because it would create two potential events or 'shopping days' in Hillsborough vs. one. This went well and staff has modified the scope to reflect that they are separate events. Assuming the Chamber is good with this, does the Tourism Board have any thoughts or feedback on this before moving forward?
- All scopes have been updated to reflect a quarterly update presentation and a bi-annual written report, aligned with how we did reporting in 2025. Is the Tourism Board still happy with this arrangement?

Staff recommendation and comments:

Staff needs direction on the above questions to best advise contract partners on how to prepare their scope of work contract responses and budgets for FY26.

FY 2026 Contract Scope of Work Hillsborough Tourism Board Alliance for Historic Hillsborough- Visitors Services & Visitors Center Operations



The Hillsborough Tourism Board is requesting a proposal to update and renew the contract with the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough to continue to operate the Hillsborough Visitors Center on a regular, on-going basis and to include the following activities:

General Visitors Center Administration and Operations:

- Administer and manage the Hillsborough Visitors Center building/property and create a welcoming and interesting Visitors Center experience
- Free general admission to the Visitors Center/Alexander Dickson House
- General admission hours of operation, seven days a week:
 - Monday-Friday 10am-4pm
 - Saturday 10am-4pm
 - Sunday 12pm-4pm; with extended hours (if needed) for the following Special Events:
 - Revolutionary War Living History Day
 - Last Fridays and Artwalk
- Hosting on the grounds or inside of the Visitors Center a minimum of 5 special events per year that highlight the Visitors Center/Alexander Dickson House and support the Tourism Program, either during or outside of, regular hours of operation
- Work with tourism partners in Hillsborough to coordinate programming and special projects at various sites and for special events
- Greet visitors to the Hillsborough Visitors Center and provide recommendations on things to do, places to eat, where to stay and other visitor services
- Staff the Hillsborough Visitors Center with well-trained and friendly paid personnel and volunteers
- Recruit, train, coordinate and supervise volunteers at the Visitors Center
- Answer inquiries in person, or via phone, email, mail, or other digital/social media
- Work with Tourism Board staff to stock, promote, and manage Hillsborough Visitors Center gift shop
- Respond to requests for visitor information packets as needed
- Provide general financial management and oversight of the Visitors Center Operations, including maintaining a detailed Visitors Center Operations budget including revenues and expenditures.
- Provision of an adequate supply of visitor services materials to the general public at the Visitors Center including:
 - o Printed brochures and/or rack cards for all attractions, tours, and events going on in the Hillsborough area
 - o Hillsborough, NC Official Visitors Maps & Guides
- Inclusion and acknowledgement of Tourism Board's support of the Hillsborough Visitors Center by use of Hillsborough Tourism logo on all printed and promotional material produced for special events, where practical and logical, as well as promotional materials to include event flyers, sponsorship information, website, programs, T-shirts, and signs/banners.

- Demonstration of sound financial management practices within the organization by hiring a third party CPA firm to regularly balance books and match revenues with expenditures and/or hire a third party auditing firm to conduct an internal audit of the organization's finances every three (3) years.

Marketing:

- Inform visitors about restaurants, attractions, hotels, inns, and other commercial service providers and retailers using the Hillsborough Tourism Program brand standards, logos, and taglines
- Coordinate with Tourism Board Staff, Tourism Board, and Tourism Development Authority to develop and manage an active tourism marketing program to promote Hillsborough, its assets, attractions, and activities locally, statewide, and nationally;
- Work with Tourism Board Staff to develop and implement an annual tourism marketing plan that includes a variety of print and digital media;
- Collaborate with the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau on relevant marketing campaigns;
- Work with Tourism Board Staff to coordinate, maintain, and regularly update the visithillsboroughnc.com website and applicable social media channels;
- Maintain and update a community-wide, tourism-related calendar of events on visithillsboroughnc.com and encourage partners to add events to it
- Develop and publish a monthly e-newsletter highlighting all of the tourism related events and special programs that would draw visitors into town
- Develop and publish a monthly calendar of event highlights for town map kiosks
- Distribute literature in bulk to regional welcome centers and transportation centers
- Provide an adequate supply of visitor materials to other visitor services displays and locations in the area including but not limited to: Riverwalk, OC Sportsplex, Orange County Historical Museum, Burwell School, Ayr Mount, Occoneechee Speedway, OC Visitors Bureau
- Create and distribute news releases from the Visitors Center highlighting events, programs, or improvements in town that would be of interest to tourists;
- Cultivate contacts with professional tour and out-of-county groups, travel writers, and meeting planners
- Market to and assist business, educational, family, and wedding groups with itinerary planning, hotel bookings, and other services to encourage group visitation

Reporting:

- Quarterly Executive Director's Report & Communications Presentation to the Tourism Board in person by an Alliance Staff Member, board member, or other volunteer indicating the planned upcoming events, number of visitors to the site for that quarter, plans to increase the number of visitors for the next quarter, and any planned improvements or changes to the historic site. Report should also include the marketing/advertising efforts for that month/quarter, any recent publications or press involving the site, any special events expansion or plans, any social media activity or updates, and activity regarding the 'Friends' program.
- Bi-annual written Contract Partner report to Tourism Board staff to be shared with Tourism Board, including any needed mid-year budget adjustments.

- Final fiscal year data report including the total number of visitors to the Visitors Center, social media data, e-newsletter data, website visitor data, and other pertinent information needed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Visitors Center.

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FY 2026 Contract Scope of Work Update

Hillsborough Tourism Board

Burwell School Historic Site- Visitor Services

The Hillsborough Tourism Board is requesting a proposal to update and renew the contract with the Historic Hillsborough Commission to continue to operate the Burwell School Historic Site on a regular, on-going basis and to include the following activities:

- Free admission to the site
- Minimum Hours of Operation from:
Wednesday-Saturday 11am-4pm
Sunday 1pm-4pm; with extended hours for the following Special Events: Last Fridays and Artwalk and Revolutionary History War Living History Day
*Preference to keep regular Saturday 11am-4pm and Sunday 1pm-4pm hours through the winter months (Please indicate in the budget and/or narrative the costs of operations to do this for FY26 keeping in mind staffing and utilities, in its own line-item)
- Minimum of 1 free guided tour per day (30 – 40 minutes) during regular Hours of Operation Wednesday-Sunday
- Coordination of a minimum of 5 special events per year that highlight the historic site, either during or outside of, regular Hours of Operation
- Demonstration of sound financial management practices within the organization by hiring a third party CPA firm to regularly balance books and match revenues with expenditures and/or hire a third party auditing firm to conduct an internal audit of the organization's finances every three (3) years.
- Quarterly Executive Director's Report & Communications Presentation to the Tourism Board in person by a Burwell School Staff Member, board member, or other volunteer indicating the planned upcoming events, number of visitors to the site for that quarter, plans to increase the number of visitors for the next quarter, and any planned improvements or changes to the historic site. Report should also include the marketing/advertising efforts for that month/quarter, any recent publications or press involving the site, any special events expansion or plans, any social media activity or updates, and activity regarding the 'Friends' program.
- Bi-annual written Contract Partner report to Tourism Board staff to be shared with Tourism Board, including any needed mid-year budget adjustments.
- Provision of materials to the general public including printed site brochures or rack cards, emailed newsletters, and other site materials provided both at the site and to the Hillsborough Visitors Center and Orange County Visitors Bureau.
- Inclusion and acknowledgement of Tourism Board's support of the Burwell School by use of Hillsborough Tourism logo on all printed and promotional materials where sponsors or supporters are listed- special events, where practical and logical, as well as promotional materials to include event flyers, sponsorship information, website, programs, T-shirts, and signs/banners.
- Inclusion of Visitors Services materials (brochures, maps, event listings) and racks/displays as required at the site in order to assist the Visitors Center and Tourism Program with providing resources for visitors.



FY 2026 Contract Scope of Work Update Hillsborough Tourism Board

Hillsborough Chamber- Visitor Services & Events

The Hillsborough Tourism Board is requesting a proposal to contract with the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce to continue to hold tourism generating events as outlined below:

Hillsborough Holiday Parade

- Hold the annual Holiday parade, annually on the first Sunday of December in the Town of Hillsborough.
- Plan, organize, and execute a holiday parade in Downtown Hillsborough to include a minimum of 50 decorative floats and walking entertainment acts. Parade should include VIPs and local celebrities that serve as a draw for the event.
- Event hours of approximately 4:00pm-6:30pm. Additional four hours that day is also necessary to facilitate and manage the lineup of all participants.
- Get local event permits including obtaining port-a-potties, handwashing stations, police support, road closures, and sound systems to support the event operations.
- Recruit volunteers where possible to help with event administration.
- Development and distribution of an event map in print in .PDF format that indicates the locations of parking, entertainment acts, and various event features
- *Provide a component of the event in West Hillsborough or include West Hillsborough in a meaningful way.*
- Coordination and location of any vendors to support the event.
- Registration and coordination of parade participants and floats, including lining up the parade, executing the parade, and coordinating any clean-up.
- Coordination of Downtown and West Hillsborough businesses to sync hours of operations with the parade, where possible.
- Coordinate with other nearby venues, historic sites, and cultural centers to coordinate other parade event elements.
- Explore creative ways to raise additional funds to sponsor the parade such as having vendor space on the courthouse lawn, engage local businesses for sponsorships, and other ideas and opportunities as they present themselves.
- On-going local and regional promotions and marketing of the Hillsborough Holiday Parade as well as promotion of the Hillsborough Hometown Holiday Festival throughout the months of November & December.

Hillsborough Tree Lighting Event

- Plan, organize, and execute a holiday tree lighting on the Old Courthouse Lawn including entertainment acts, and food/beverage options.
- Get local event permits including obtaining port-a-potties, handwashing stations, police support, road closures, and sound systems to support the event operations.
- On-going local and regional promotions and marketing of the Hillsborough Tree Lighting as well as promotion of the Hillsborough Hometown Holiday Festival throughout the months of November & December.

General

- Inclusion and acknowledgement of Tourism Board's support of the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce and the events listed above by use of Hillsborough Tourism logo on all printed and promotional materials where sponsors or supporters are listed- special events, where practical and logical, as well as promotional materials to include event flyers, sponsorship information, website, programs, T-shirts, and signs/banners.
- Final Report to the Tourism Board after the events conclude in person by a Chamber Staff Member, board member, or other volunteer indicating the planning for the event, any plans or developments that increased the number of visitors or enhanced the event, and any planned improvements or changes to the event. The marketing/advertising efforts for the event, any recent publications or press involving the events, any special event expansion or plans, any social media activity or updates, and activity regarding any fundraising for the events.
- Provision of promotional materials to the general public including printed maps, brochures or rack cards, emailed newsletters, and other materials provided at the Chamber offices.
- Inclusion of Visitors Services materials (brochures, maps, event listings) and racks/displays as required at the Chamber offices in order to assist the Visitors Center and Tourism Program with providing resources for visitors.
- Demonstration of sound financial management practices within the organization by hiring a third party CPA firm to regularly balance books and match revenues with expenditures and/or hire a third party auditing firm to conduct an internal audit of the organization's finances every three (3) years.
- Participation in other Tourism Program sponsored events and programs, where feasible.



FY 2026 Contract Scope of Work Update Hillsborough Tourism Board

Hillsborough Arts Council- Visitor Services & Events

The Hillsborough Tourism Board is requesting a proposal to update and renew the contract with the Hillsborough Arts Council to continue to hold tourism generating events as outlined below:

Hillsborough Last Fridays and Art Walk

- Hold live entertainment at various downtown/West Hillsborough locations on the last Friday of the Month from March-October with key festival months being April-September for a minimum of two (2) hours
- Festival hours of approximately 6:30pm-9:30pm
- Obtain local permits, port-a-potties, handwashing stations, police support, stages and/or sound systems to support the event operations
- Recruit volunteers where possible to help with event administration
- Development and distribution of an event map that indicates the locations of parking, music, and various event features
- Provide a component of the event in West Hillsborough or include West Hillsborough in a meaningful way
- Coordination and location of vendors
- Coordination and location of visual arts installations, displays, and/or performers
- Coordination of Downtown and West Hillsborough businesses to sync Friday Night hours of operations with the festival
- Coordinate with other nearby venues, historic sites, and cultural centers to also provide festival elements and sync Friday Night hours of operations with the festival
- On-going local and regional promotions and marketing of Last Fridays and Art Walk
- Hold an art walk that is free and open to the public on the last Friday of the month, every month
- Art walk hours of approximately 6-9pm
- Recruit volunteers where possible to help with event administration
- Develop and distribute an Art Walk map that indicates the locations of parking, art walk locations, and other important information
- Provide a component of the Art Walk event in West Hillsborough and try to include West Hillsborough businesses
- Coordination of art walk locations and encourage art gallery and local business participation
- Provide clear, visible art walk signage for art walk locations
- Coordinate and encourage other nearby venues, historic sites, and cultural centers to participate in the art walk
- Coordination of Downtown and West Hillsborough businesses to sync Friday Night hours of operations with the art walk
- On-going local and regional promotions and marketing of the Art Walk

Hillsborough Handmade Parade (off-year expenses/planning & year of execution)

- Hold the handmade parade, bi-annually, in October on a Sunday in even years in the Town of Hillsborough
- Obtain local permits, port-a-potties, handwashing stations, police support, road closures, and/or sound systems to support the event operations
- Recruit volunteers where possible to help with event administration
- Hold local workshops to encourage parade participation and handmade puppet making
- Store and transport large scale puppets to and from the parade route
- Update and refresh puppets that were in storage prior to the parade
- Provide local and regional promotions and marketing of the Handmade Parade in the months leading up to the event
- Explore creative ways to raise additional funds to sponsor the parade such as having vendor space on the courthouse lawn, engage local businesses for sponsorships, and other ideas and opportunities as they present themselves

Solstice Lantern Walk

- Hold the lantern walk annually in December in the Town of Hillsborough
- Obtain local permits, port-a-potties, handwashing stations, police support, road closures, and/or sound systems to support the event operations
- Recruit volunteers where possible to help with event administration
- Hold local workshops to encourage parade participation and lantern making
- Provide local and regional promotions and marketing of the Lantern Walk in the months leading up to the event
- Explore creative ways to raise additional funds to sponsor the parade such as having vendor space in River Park, engage local businesses for sponsorships, and other ideas and opportunities as they present themselves

General

- Inclusion and acknowledgement of Tourism Board's support of the Hillsborough Arts Council and the programs/events listed above by use of Hillsborough Tourism logo on all printed and promotional materials where sponsors or supporters are listed- special events, where practical and logical, as well as promotional materials to include event flyers, sponsorship information, website, programs, T-shirts, and signs/banners.
- Quarterly Executive Director's Report & Communications Presentation to the Tourism Board in person by a HAC Staff Member, board member, or other volunteer indicating the planned upcoming events, number of visitors to the site for that quarter, plans to increase the number of visitors for the next quarter, and any planned improvements or changes to the historic site. Report should also include the marketing/advertising efforts for that month/quarter, any recent publications or press involving the site, any special events expansion or plans, any social media activity or updates, and activity regarding the 'Friends' program.
- Bi-annual written Contract Partner report to Tourism Board staff to be shared with Tourism Board, including any needed mid-year budget adjustments.
- Provision of promotional materials to the general public including printed maps, brochures or rack cards, emailed newsletters, and other materials provided both at the Arts Council Gift Shop and to the Hillsborough Visitors Center, Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce, and Orange County Visitors Bureau.
- Inclusion of Visitors Services materials (brochures, maps, event listings) and racks/displays as required at the Hillsborough Arts Council Gift Shop in order to assist the Visitors Center and Tourism Program with providing resources for visitors.

- Demonstration of sound financial management practices within the organization by hiring a third party CPA firm to regularly balance books and match revenues with expenditures and/or hire a third party auditing firm to conduct an internal audit of the organization's finances every three (3) years.
- Participation in other Tourism Program sponsored events and programs, where feasible.

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FY 2026 Contract Scope of Work Update Hillsborough Tourism Board



Orange County Historical Museum- Visitor Services

The Hillsborough Tourism Board is requesting a proposal to update and renew the contract with the Historical Foundation of Hillsborough & Orange County to continue to operate the Orange County Historical Museum on a regular, on-going basis and to include the following activities:

- Free general admission to the museum and exhibits (permitted ticketing for certain special events and exhibits)
- Minimum Hours of Operation from:
Wednesday-Saturday 11am-4pm
Sunday 1pm-4pm; with extended hours (if needed) for the following Special Events: Last Fridays and Artwalk and Revolutionary History War Living History Day
*Preference to keep regular Saturday 11am-4pm and Sunday 1pm-4pm hours through the winter months (Please indicate in the budget and/or narrative the approximate cost of operations to do this for FY25 keeping in mind staffing and utilities, in its own line item.)
- Coordination of a minimum of 5 special events per year that highlight the museum, either during or outside of, regular Hours of Operation. Please outline in scope of work response what these are planned to be.
- Demonstration of sound financial management practices within the organization by hiring a third party CPA firm to regularly balance books and match revenues with expenditures and/or hire a third party auditing firm to conduct an internal audit of the organization's finances every three (3) years.
- Quarterly Executive Director's Report & Communications Presentation to the Tourism Board in person by a Museum Staff Member, board member, or other volunteer indicating the planned upcoming events, number of visitors to the site for that quarter, plans to increase the number of visitors for the next quarter, and any planned improvements or changes to the historic site. Report should also include the marketing/advertising efforts for that month/quarter, any recent publications or press involving the site, any special events expansion or plans, any social media activity or updates, and activity regarding the 'Friends' program.
- Bi-annual written Contract Partner report to Tourism Board staff to be shared with Tourism Board, including any needed mid-year budget adjustments.
- Provision of promotional materials to the general public including printed museum brochures or rack cards, emailed newsletters, and other museum materials provided both at the museum and to the Hillsborough Visitors Center, Hillsborough Chamber, and Orange County Visitors Bureau.
- Inclusion and acknowledgement of Tourism Board's support of the Orange County Historical Museum by use of Hillsborough Tourism logo on all printed and promotional materials where sponsors or supporters are listed- special events, where practical and logical, as well as promotional materials to include event flyers, sponsorship information, website, programs, T-shirts, and signs/banners.

- Inclusion of Visitors Services materials (brochures, maps, event listings) and racks/displays as required at the site in order to assist the Visitors Center and Tourism Program with providing resources for visitors.

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