

# Agenda

## Hillsborough Tourism Development Authority

5:30 p.m. March 4, 2026

Town Board Meeting Room, 105 E. Corbin St.



### 1. Call to order and confirmation of quorum

### 2. Agenda changes and approval

### 3. Discussion/Action Items

Special Projects and Partnership Funding Requests:

- A. Town of Hillsborough A250 Event Partnership- \$12,500
- B. Riverpark Concert Event Partnership- \$10,000
- C. Moorefields Jazz Festival Partnership- \$2,000

D. Draft FY 2027 TDA Budget

### 4. Monthly Reports and Updates

- A. Tourism Staff Updates & Occupancy Tax Report
- B. TDA Member Comments & Updates

### 5. Adjournment



### **Background**

July 4, 2026 will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Per America250.org – “the journey toward this historic milestone is an opportunity to pause and reflect on our nation’s past, honor the contributions of all Americans, and look ahead toward the future we want to create for the next generation and beyond.” As a historic town with treasured Revolutionary-era significance, this creates an opportunity for a local event to celebrate and remember the past 250 years.

The Town of Hillsborough Board of Commissioners (“Town Board”) provided funding in the FY2026 budget for planning and executing a special event in July 2026 to commemorate America 250 (“A250”). The Town does not have a regular July 4th event, and summer is a historically slow time for local businesses. Special events are not unknown in Hillsborough, and the town regularly hosts thousands of visitors for such experiences as the Last Fridays, Handmade Parade, Christmas Parade, River Park Concert, Hog Day, and Solstice Lantern Walk. All of the current slate of special events are managed by non-profit agencies with some support or sponsorship from the Town. In planning for the July 4th event, the Town has not found an outside agency willing to produce the event.

### **Concept**

The planning framework for our A250 event is keeping with the scale of Downtown Hillsborough. The event will be free to attend (non-ticketed), provide family-friendly entertainment and inclusive historical educational programming, and showcase some of the region’s visual, performing, and literary artists.

In keeping with the values of the community, the event will be inclusive and acknowledge the historical experiences of the native people of Hillsborough as well as the enslaved or otherwise underrepresented populations of the Town during the revolutionary era through present day. This would be a celebration of all people, with emphasis on native people, customs, and culture. Possible partnerships include Occaneechi Tribal Council, Triangle Native American Society, and UNC American Indian Center.

Current ideas include:

- “Headlining” features such as a laser light show paired with local orchestra
- Parade with handmade flags
- Activities and attractions in partnership with Hillsborough historic agencies (OC Historic Museum, Burwell School, Alliance for Historic Hillsborough) and the Hillsborough Arts Council
- Performances, customs, and culinary offerings through partnership with our local Tribal Councils
- Music performances
- Kids’ costume contest, “Your favorite hero from American history”
- Visual artists, dancers, spoken word artists and poets, roaming actors as historic Hillsborough figures (focus on local and regional artists and performers), historical readings and comments from local dignitaries

In order to activate multiple sites in Downtown Hillsborough, as well as to avoid interfering with the Eno River Farmer’s Market which operates from 8am-12pm, we propose craft vendors, food trucks/demos, and smaller stages located on the Courthouse Lawn and the front lawn of the Visitors’ Center earlier in the day. As late afternoon/evening approaches, headlining performances (such as the laser/orchestra show) and larger-scale activities will shift to River Park.

The chart below presents a draft budget that has not been finalized:

<b>Event Element</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Entertainment	\$12,000
Hospitality / Food	\$11,500
Insurance	\$2,000
Miscellaneous	\$1,500
Printing	\$5,000
Publicity	\$500
Site Preparation / Rentals	\$7,500
Sound & Technical	\$5,000
Event Staffing	\$5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 50,000</b>

The Town Board has provided \$25,000 for the event, with matching funds requested from the Town's Tourism Board and Tourism Development Authority. In addition to the financial investment, the Town will treat this as a sponsored special event and provide in-kind contributions in the form of security, traffic control, event staffing and trash management (estimated value - \$10,000).

# Hillsborough Tourism Development Authority FY26 Special Project/ Partnership Funding Request



<b>Organization Information</b>		
Organization Name: WHUP FM		
Contract Contact Person and Title: Bob Burtman, Chair		
Contact Person Email: <a href="mailto:bburtman@earthlink.net">bburtman@earthlink.net</a>	Contact Person Phone: 919-260-2138	
Organization Street Address: 117 West King Street		
City: Hillsborough	State: NC	ZIP Code: 27278
Organization's Annual Operating Budget: \$ 85,000		
Amount of TDA funding being requested: \$ 10,000		FISCAL YEAR: FY26
<b>General Information</b>		

Outline/Overview of the requested proposal:

We are seeking funding again for this year's annual FREE River Park Concert which will be in the fall. This year's event is scheduled to take place on Saturday, October 24th in the River Park.

In the current economic environment, we are finding it necessary to transition to a fully localized sponsorship model for the concert and away from out of state support. We implemented a plan last year but it did not shore up the funding . We appreciated last year's TDA funding and are requesting funding once again to support our advertising efforts. Our request for this TDA Funding is to allow us to bridge towards more localized event sponsors to ensure we maintain the level of talent and production that has sustained the event for the past 8 years. The nature of the funding request is to promote the event with print, banners, radio advertising and social media posts to expand awareness to Hillsborough and neighboring areas.

Please explain how the proposal will promote tourism in Hillsborough:

By funding the 1,000 concert flyers and placement of Banners, Radio ads, and social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), we will ensure maximum awareness of the FREE Concert Event. We operate the concert from noon - dark thereby ensuring we are not competing with local business for the evening hours and people are drawn into town and can shop and eat and drink during the day and into the evening.

Hillsborough has become known for the ARTS and Music and this Signature Event for the town continues to enforce and support that experience. United in Music and Happiness in 27278 is a theme and the River Park is proof of this. The Event is open to all ages to attend, and we ID at the gate to ensure compliance with best practices and ABC Laws.

Here were the stats from our River Park Concert website last year - 90 day's leading up to the event which was held on Saturday Oct 25th, 2025. The Headliner was Grammy Nominated - Sierra Hull!

Aug 1 - Oct 25, 2025

Filter

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Page path <sup>i</sup>	City	Country	Page views	Site sessions <sup>+</sup> <sup>i</sup>	Unique visitors <sup>i</sup>
Summary			8,957	5,303	3,572
/	Durham	United States	721	606	486
/	Charlotte	United States	531	464	387
/	Hillsborough	United States	532	436	355
/rpc2025	Durham	United States	477	395	287
/rpc2025	Charlotte	United States	363	316	235
/	Chapel Hill	United States	359	298	252
/	Raleigh	United States	321	276	236
/rpc2025	Hillsborough	United States	255	217	176
/rpc2025	Chapel Hill	United States	233	187	155
/rpc2025	Raleigh	United States	197	162	126
/	Mebane	United States	182	158	139

Website: [www.riverparkconcert.com](http://www.riverparkconcert.com)

**RPC Facebook Account - 90 days leading up to the event Oct 25, 2025:**

**210,879 Views**

1,543 Total Followers

**70% Women, 30% Men**

27.3% - AGE 45-54

26.1% - AGE 55-64

23.3% - AGE 35-44

23.3% - OTHER

We are confident that with the requested funding we will see even more traffic to our website and social media platforms to drive awareness of the FREE community building concert in the River Park.

**Tourism Impact**

Please estimate the number of residents this proposal will serve: 2,000

Please estimate the number of tourists this proposal will bring to town: 5,000

If this proposal has been held or done before, please describe how the actual number of residents and tourists were counted (ie. registration/pre-registration, ticket sales either prior to the event or at the event gates, via turn style data, counters from volunteers, wristband tracking, counts at the site):

We get a count from the Security and Off Duty OC Sherriff's Dept. We also capture Drone Footage and can count this way as well to see saturation and also peak hours of attendance (Generally 2-6pm)

Please describe how you plan to partner with local hotel/motels on this proposal:

Last year's event saw over 40 hotel rooms and several AirBnB's utilized for 2-4 days.

Please describe how you plan to partner with local business/non-profits/governments on this proposal:

We work and have worked closely with Local, county, and town police and sheriff's departments and implement best practices for concerts to minimize risk and prevent injury to the public. We ensure that only 21 years and older can purchase alcohol. We closely align with Orange County Parks and Rec as well as town services to ensure a safe environment during the concert.

WHUP worked with Hillsborough Art's Council and other local businesses to build out the Art Walk for patrons to purchase local art and craft items.

We provide promotional material to the town and county for advertising the event leveraging the custom art work designed for the River Park Concert.

We work to align with a Sustainable event by providing reusable cups and metal cups for purchase thereby reducing waste.

We coordinate with the town and county to ensure we have enough garbage and recycling for day of event.

We also coordinate efforts and timing with the Eno River Farmer's Walk.

We leave the River Park grounds clean and ensure it is taken down in a responsible way to ensure everyone is safe.

**Economic Impact using the calculation tool on the website was \$270,855**

Instructions

Provide the information below to calculate the economic impact of your organization (or a group of organizations).

Population of your community:

Less than 50,000

Total Expenses: \$

62000

Total Attendance:

7000

Total Economic Impact

Organization(s):

Audiences:

Total:

Total Expenditures

\$62,000

\$208,855

\$270,855

FTE Jobs

2

4

7

Household Income

\$40,528

\$90,528

\$131,056

Local Government Revenue

\$1,761

\$8,634

\$10,395

State Government Revenue

\$3,147

\$12,439

\$15,586

Please [calculate the overall economic impact](#) of this proposal (if applicable):

Please outline how you plan to make this proposal financially sustainable overtime:

We will be seeking more EVENT sponsors to replace the TDA funding over time. This funding will enable a bridge while we move away from out-of-town sponsors to more local for sustainability of the FREE annual concert over time.

Detailed Special Project/Partnership Budget				
a. Item	b. Amount Requested via Grant Funds (for each item)	c. Other Funding Sources & In-Kind Donations		d. Total Budget (add columns b-d)
		Amount	Source	
Ex: Revolutionary War Re-enactors	Ex: \$1,000	Ex: \$300	Ex: State Historical Society	\$1,800
1. Printed Flyer Advertising	\$ 1,500	\$		\$ 1,500
2. Banners	\$ 4,500	\$		\$ 4,500
3. Social Media Advertising	\$ 1,000	\$		\$ 1,000
4. Local Radio Advertising	\$ 3,000	\$		\$ 2,500
5. Musician Contracts (4)	\$	\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000
6. Sound/Stage/Lights	\$	\$ 14,000		\$ 14,000
7. Green Room	\$	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
8. Sanitation & Port a Potties	\$	\$ 1,600		\$ 1,600
9. Security	\$	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
10. OC Park Fees	\$	\$ 350		\$ 350
11. ABC Permit	\$	\$ 50		\$ 50

12. Alcohol Insurance Policy	\$	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
13. Town Fees	\$	\$ 75		\$ 75
14. OC Vendor Fees	\$	\$ 400		\$ 400
15. NCDOR Sales Use Tax	\$	\$ 1,000		\$ 1,000
16. Festival Beer/Cider/NA	\$	\$ 3,600		\$ 3,600
17. Cups-plastic / Metal	\$	\$ 6,000		\$ 6,000
<b>TOTALS</b> (sum of each column)		<b>\$ 10,000</b>		<b>\$ 53,075</b>

\*\* PLEASE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH ROOM TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR FULL BUDGET \*\*

**Total Project Funding Requested from TDA \$ 10,000**

Percentage of Matching Funds Provided  
(by either 'In-Kind Donations' or 'Other Sources'): **85%**

Dollar amount of Matching Funds Provided  
(by either 'In-Kind Donations' or 'Other Sources'): **\$ 53,075**

X Check this box acknowledging that all funds must be used for the program/event as outlined in the budget and that the tourism logo and tourism partnership should be acknowledged and displayed on all promotional materials (flyers, tshirts, banners, social media posts) where other sponsors are listed or promoted.

\_\_\_\_2/19/26\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_Bob Burtman & TMA\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & Printed Name

# Hillsborough Tourism Development Authority FY26 Special Project/ Partnership Funding Request



Organization Information		
Organization Name: Moorefields		
Contract Contact Person and Title: Cecily Nisbet, Executive Director		
Contact Person Email: <a href="mailto:Cecily@Moorefields.org">Cecily@Moorefields.org</a>	Contact Person Phone: 919-771-3144	
Organization Street Address: 2201 Moorefields Road		
City: Hillsborough	NC	ZIP Code: 27278
Organization's Annual Operating Budget: \$ 110,000		
Amount of TDA funding being requested: \$ 2000		FISCAL YEAR: FY26
General Information		
Outline/Overview of the requested proposal:		
<p>Moorefields and WHUP are partnering to present the Hillsborough Jazz Festival at Moorefields on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> from 1-5pm. This event's purpose is two-fold: 1) to bring together the community, and 2) raise funds for both non-profit organizations. Our hope is that support from the TDA will help with the necessary expenses, mainly the musicians.</p> <p>The Jazz Festival brings together nationally recognized artists and rising local talent for a dynamic celebration of music and community. The lineup features the electrifying Sam Fribush Trio (from Greensboro), the soulful Angela Bingham Quartet, and talented students from the Durham Jazz Workshop.</p> <p>Visitors from Hillsborough and around the state will enjoy an afternoon filled with incredible performances, artisan craft vendors, food trucks, and beverages available for purchase. Whether visitors are longtime jazz enthusiasts or just looking for a lively spring afternoon event, this festival offers something for everyone.</p>		
Please explain how the proposal will promote tourism in Hillsborough:		
<p>This event will highlight what a vibrant community we have. Visit Hillsborough has already started promoting the event. We will have an artisan market with local artists and food trucks from the community, working with the Piedmont Food Processing Center. Eno River Brewing will be providing discounted beer for us to sell at the beverage tent. Nomad will be selling food. We will have an after party at Yonder. Because we are two very different non-profits presenting the event we also demonstrate our rich community: everything from nature preserves to historic houses to community radio and great local music.</p>		
Tourism Impact		
Please estimate the number of residents this proposal will serve: 250	Please estimate the number of tourists this proposal will bring to town: 450	

If this proposal has been held or done before, please describe how the actual number of residents and tourists were counted (ie. registration/pre-registration, ticket sales either prior to the event or at the event gates, via turn style data, counters from volunteers, wristband tracking, counts at the site):

For the past ten years (approximately), Moorefields has hosted a fall Bluegrass Festival. We are adding this spring musical event due to encouragement from our past Bluegrass attendees. We typically have 400-600 for the Bluegrass Festival. Last fall, 2025, we had 500 attendees, based on our manual clicker counter. Of these, approximately 150 purchased tickets online in advance. Based on their home zip codes, 50% were from Hillsborough, the other 50% were from other parts of NC or out of state.

Please describe how you plan to partner with local hotel/motels on this proposal:

On Thursday, Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>, Moorefields Executive Director, Cecily Nisbet, and WHUP Station Manager, Danielle Rose, will visit the Colonial Inn and the Holiday Inn Express. We will give them a discount code and are hoping that they will offer and promote it to their guests and potential guests.

Please describe how you plan to partner with local business/non-profits/governments on this proposal:

Food trucks: We will have five local food trucks selling food. Nomad has agreed to have a table and we are working with the Piedmont Food Center to find other local businesses. We will have beer and wine for sale. Eno River Brewing will provide beer at a discount and they will be our exclusive beer for the festival.

Artisan Market: We will have an artisan market for local artists to sell their creations. Additionally, we will offer some non-profits to have tables in the Artisan Market. For example, the Durham Jazz Workshop has a group of students performing at no charge, so we are giving them a way to promote their organization. We would also like to have information from the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough and other local sites of interest on display.

Downtown promotion: Our emcee, Ben Palmer, will encourage attendees to go downtown for a bite after the event. Additionally, Yonder will be hosting an afterparty which we anticipate will be popular after the festival ends around 5:30.

Please [calculate the overall economic impact](#) of this proposal (if applicable): n/a

Please outline how you plan to make this proposal financially sustainable overtime:

This event will always need sponsors to enhance ticket sales, to be a strong fundraising event. We hope to find other community organizations and businesses to sponsor this in the future.



Dollar amount of Matching Funds Provided  
(by either 'In-Kind Donations' or 'Other Sources'):

\$ 4100

Check this box acknowledging that all funds must be used for the program/event as outlined in the budget and that the tourism logo and tourism partnership should be acknowledged and displayed on all promotional materials (flyers, tshirts, banners, social media posts) where other sponsors are listed or promoted.

2/24/2026

Date



Cecily T. Nisbet

Signature & Printed Name

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY				
OBJECT	FY26 BUDGET	FY27 BUDGET	FY28 BUDGET	FY29 BUDGET
<b>Audit Fees</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>
<b>Attorney Fees</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>Training/Conferences/Conventions</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>2,600</b>	<b>2,600</b>
<b>Advertising</b>	<b>20,300</b>	<b>21,300</b>	<b>24,300</b>	<b>24,300</b>
<i>Ad Buys/Tourism Marketing/Photography</i>	17,500	18,500	21,500	21,500
<i>Budget Public Hearing Ad</i>	300	300	300	300
<i>WHUP Underwriting</i>	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
<b>Data Processing Services</b>	<b>3,200</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>3,500</b>
<b>C.S./Town Of Hillsborough</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>13,000</b>
<i>Support Staff; salaries + benefits: Planning-40%, TDA-20%, TB-40%</i>	13,000	13,000	13,000	13,000
<b>Dues &amp; Subscriptions</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>
<i>Bond Insurance</i>	180	180	180	180
<i>Liability Insurance</i>	1,020	1,020	1,020	1,020
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>6,200</b>
<b>Special Projects/Partnerships</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>88,000</b>	<b>46,000</b>	<b>42,000</b>
<i>Hillsborough Arts Council - Solstice Lantern Walk Event</i>	10,000	10,000	-	-
<i>Holiday Decor</i>	10,000	10,000	-	-
<i>Performing Arts Center Exploration</i>	40,000	30,000	-	-
<i>Town/TDA Uproar Public Art Purchase (FY26, FY28)</i>	4,000	-	4,000	-
<i>Riverwalk Entrance Shelter cost share (ToH)</i>		12,000		
<i>Uproar Festival of Public Art cost Share (ToH, TB, OC)</i>		7,000		
<i>Calvin/Nash St Kiosk Sign Cost Share (ToH)</i>		9,000		
<i>Unassigned</i>	20,000	10,000	42,000	42,000
<b>3% Holdback Occupancy Tax</b>	-	-	-	-
Starting in FY26 finance started taking percentage at revenue collection				
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>133,150</b>	<b>138,450</b>	<b>103,150</b>	<b>99,150</b>