

# Agenda

## Hillsborough Tourism Board

5:30 p.m. August 31, 2026

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



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

### 2. Agenda changes and approval

### 3. Minutes

A. January 5, 2026

B. June 1, 2026 (Budget Public Hearing)

### 4. Presentations

A. Q3/Q4 Updates and Final Contract Partner(s) Reports (in packet) for FY26:

- Burwell School
- Hillsborough Arts Council
- OC Museum
- Alliance (Visitors Center)

### 5. Regular Discussion/Action Items

A. Tourism Board Funding Structure Updates (grants, contract partners, special projects/partnerships/sponsorship)

### 6. Monthly Reports and Comments

A. Tourism Staff Updates

- OCVB Updates
- TDA may also discuss their funding structure
- CycleNC event (funded via TDA, but tourism program supported) on October 5<sup>th</sup>
- Identify possible alternate date for October Tourism Board meeting (if needed due to CycleNC event)

B. Tourism Board Member Comments & 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.

# Minutes

## TOURISM BOARD

### Regular meeting

5:30 p.m. January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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



**Present:** Chair Victoria Pace, Vice-Chair Megan Kimball,  
Rainbow Cabbage, Barney Caton, Scott Czechlewski,  
Smita Patel, and Eryk Pruitt

**Absent:** Meaghun Darab

**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 5:31 p.m. with the presence of a quorum.

#### 2. Agenda changes and approval

**Motion:** Member Caton moved to approve the agenda as presented. Member Patel seconded.  
**Vote:** 6-0.

#### 3. Minutes review and approval

The minutes from November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, were presented for approval. No changes were suggested.

**Motion:** Member Pruitt moved approval of the November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, minutes as submitted. Member Czechlewski seconded.  
**Vote:** 6-0.

#### 4. Presentations

- A. New board member interview- Spencer Welborn (Eno River Brewing)  
Planning and Economic Development Manager Shannan Campbell introduced Spencer Welborn, who had applied to fill a vacant seat for a food and beverage tax remitter on the Tourism Board.

Spencer Welborn introduced himself as co-owner of Eno River Brewing, which opened approximately 2½ years ago. He shared that he has been a Hillsborough resident since 2010 but has had connections to Hillsborough his entire life, having grown up near the Orange County/Durham County line. Before opening the brewery, he worked in higher education at UNC.

Mr. Welborn expressed his interest in getting involved with the community and mentioned that he completed the Government 101 course last fall. He emphasized his belief that Hillsborough offers unique and genuine tourism opportunities compared to neighboring jurisdictions. He noted that he would bring a

valuable perspective to the board, having both grown up visiting Hillsborough for events like Hog Day and now operating a business in town.

Following his presentation, board members introduced themselves to Mr. Welborn. Campbell noted that the Tourism Board would discuss the potential appointment later in the meeting.

## 5. Discussion/Action items

### A. 2026 Tourism Board Regular Meeting Schedule Adoption

Shannan Campbell presented the proposed 2026 meeting schedule. She noted that unlike some years, there were no conflicts requiring date shifts. There was discussion about a potential conflict with the June 1st meeting, as it falls near Memorial Day weekend. Board members agreed to adopt the schedule as presented, with the understanding they could revisit the June date if attendance issues arose closer to that time. Campbell emphasized the importance of having a quorum for the June meeting due to budget adoption requirements.

Motion: Member Caton moved to adopt the proposed 2026 meeting schedule. Member Czechlewski seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

### B. FY 27 Initial Draft Budget & FY 25/26 Revenue Comparisons

Campbell presented an initial draft of the FY 27 budget for discussion purposes. She explained that the numbers for contract partners were placeholders from the previous year, as decisions about those allocations would be made by the board during future meetings. She highlighted several potential tourism projects for the board to consider:

- Calvin/Nash Street kiosk cost-share signage project with the Town of Hillsborough, which would place informational kiosks at the new Riverwalk entrance and in the West Hillsborough business district
- A shelter at the main Riverwalk entrance at Weaver Street to provide shade
- Tourism website update, as the current site is functioning but built on an outdated theme that can cause technical issues

Board members discussed revenue projections and the potential deficit of approximately \$50,000 if the budget remained as presented. Member Cabbage suggested that the deficit could be addressed by reducing contract partner allocations proportionally. Member Caton noted that using the fund balance would not be significant as the fund balance is healthy. There was discussion about whether continuing to use fund balance was sustainable in the long term, especially if revenues don't continue to come in higher than projected.

Member Czechlewski requested trend data for the fund balance over the past 10 years to help inform decisions. Several board members noted that difficult conversations about allocations would likely occur during the contract partner presentations in upcoming months.

### C. 2026 VisitNC365 Conference Attendance (March 16-18 Asheville, NC)

Campbell informed the board about the upcoming VisitNC Tourism Conference scheduled for March 16-18, 2026, in Asheville. She noted that the board typically sends 2-3 members and covers hotel accommodation, conference registration, mileage, and meals not provided by the conference.

Campbell emphasized the value of the conference for networking and learning about state tourism initiatives. Member Caton noted that attendees get advance information about state marketing plans for the year.



Several members expressed interest, though Chair Pace mentioned a scheduling conflict with a trip to Japan. Board members discussed accommodation options. No members expressed definitive interest. Campbell indicated that members should reach out to her if they'd like to attend. She said that unfortunately she had a scheduling conflict this year and could likely not attend.

## 6. Monthly reports and comments

### A. Tourism Staff Report, Visitors Center Updates, & OC Visitors Bureau Updates

Campbell reported that January is typically quieter for tourism activities as businesses recover from the chaos of the holiday season. She mentioned that the Orange County Visitors Bureau did not meet in December, so there were no updates to report.

Member Czechlewski, of the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce, provided an update on the Christmas parade, reporting 92 entries (up from 90 the previous year). He noted some spacing issues during the parade, particularly related to the Hillsborough Cheer Dance and Gymnastics group, which performs during the parade. He also mentioned challenges with parking enforcement along the parade route and difficulties with the exit strategy, as participants did not follow the planned route after completing the parade.

Dani McIvor, of the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough, provided a brief update on the "Tinsel & Traditions" holiday event, reporting that it exceeded sales projections with 270 tickets sold against a goal of 250. The celebration at the visitor center received positive feedback. It was noted that a more detailed report would be provided at a future meeting.

Several board members commented on the success of the tree lighting, the holiday shuttle service, and the Solstice lantern walk. Member Patel mentioned that the change in the Solstice event format resulted in fewer reservation delays compared to previous years. She said that she was really happy with the change for Solstice and thought other business owners probably were as well.

### B. Tourism Board Member comments and updates

Spencer Welborn excused himself from the meeting as the board discussed his appointment to the vacant food and beverage tax remitter position.

A motion to recommend Spencer Welborn for appointment to the Tourism Board was motioned and affirmed by all.

The board was informed that their recommendation would go to the Town Board for approval at their Monday night meeting.

Motion: Member Caton moved to appoint Spencer Welborn to the Tourism Board. Member Cabbage seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

## 7. Adjournment

Chair Pace adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dakotah Kimbrough  
Planning Technician

Staff support to the Hillsborough Tourism Board

Approved: August 31, 2026

DRAFT

# Minutes

## TOURISM BOARD

### Regular meeting- BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

5:30 p.m. June 1, 2026

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



Present: Vice-Chair Eryk Pruitt, Megan Kimball, Rainbow Cabbage, Meaghun Darab, Scott Czechlewski, Barry Hupp, Smita Patel

Absent: Barney Caton, Chair Victoria Pace

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

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

Vice-Chair Eryk Pruitt called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. Planning and Economic Development Manager Shannan Campbell confirmed the presence of a quorum.

#### 2. Agenda changes and approval

Vice-Chair Pruitt invited any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, a motion was made to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion: Commissioner Meaghun Darab moved to approve the agenda as presented. Member Megan Kimball seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

#### 3. Minutes

##### A. April 6, 2026

The Board indicated readiness to adopt the April 6, 2026, minutes without changes.

Motion: Member Kimball moved approval of the April 6, 2026, minutes as submitted. Member Spencer Welborn seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

##### B. May 4, 2026

C. The Board indicated readiness to adopt the May 4, 2026, minutes without changes.

Motion: Member Darab moved approval of the May 4, 2026, minutes as submitted. Member Welborn seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

#### 4. Discussion/Action items

A. Burwell School Scope of Work Response Presentation

Matt Hughes, Chair of the Historic Hillsborough Commission, presented on behalf of the Burwell School Historic Site, accompanied by Director of Finance Kat Kirschner and newly appointed Site Director Elizabeth Hays.

### **Operational and Programmatic Recovery**

Hughes opened by highlighting the organization's operational recovery following difficulties stemming from a former employee embezzlement situation in 2019–2020. He noted that Burwell had successfully prosecuted the former employee, filed all back IRS Form 990s, paid outstanding fines and interest to both the IRS and the Department of Revenue, dramatically increased fundraising through a successful annual gala, and expanded its commission membership to 28 volunteers.

### **FY27 Contract Request**

Hughes addressed the Board's prior questions regarding the funding request. He explained that in FY25, Burwell received \$85,000 in contracted services. In FY26, Burwell proactively requested \$15,000 less and made up the shortfall through fundraising. For FY27, Burwell is requesting a return to the FY25 level of \$85,000, citing increased staffing costs, site maintenance needs, and reduced revenue due to the cancellation or postponement of their annual gala. Kirschner clarified that the request is intended to cover personnel costs, with the organization intending to fund remaining budget needs through fundraising. She also noted an anticipated major expense — exterior painting of the historic house and window repairs — estimated at \$35,000 to \$40,000, which will need to be addressed through separate fundraising efforts.

Hughes also noted that a recent assessment revealed approximately 85 window panes in need of replacement at an estimated cost of around \$10,000, underscoring the scope of deferred maintenance at the facility.

He clarified a previous budget question that the payroll tax (account 7007) reflects employer-paid FICA taxes, and payroll service fees (account 7008) reflect costs for third-party payroll processing.

Regarding fundraising, Hughes described Burwell's plans to pursue smaller fund-and-need programs in the fall and to launch a capital campaign with the goal of establishing an endowment to fund building maintenance in perpetuity, thereby allowing contracted and grant funds to be directed toward direct programming. On extended seasonal closures, Hughes stated that significant cost savings from reduced staff hours during the holiday period are already incorporated into operations, and that further reductions would not be operationally feasible, as staff continue working during the closure to support gala planning and other organizational needs.

Hughes noted that the Historic Hillsborough Commission received less funding than the Arts Council and the Historical Museum last fiscal year — while carrying a heavier organizational burden as the only contract partner created by state statute, subject to state oversight by the NC Department of Cultural Natural Resources, unable to control its own membership (appointments made by the Office of the Governor), and solely responsible for maintaining its own physical facilities.

### **Introduction of New Site Director**

Elizabeth Hays, newly appointed Site Director, addressed the Board. A long-term Hillsborough resident of nearly 25 years, Hays spoke to what draws visitors to Hillsborough — its distinctive blend of arts and history — and expressed her enthusiasm for the mission to maintain and interpret the historic property, including its layered connections to 19th-century Hillsborough, the education of girls, the lives of free and enslaved individuals, and notable historical figures such as Elizabeth Hobbs Keckly, who worked at Burwell before becoming a prominent figure in Washington, D.C. Hays conveyed confidence in the current staff's integrity

and resilience and expressed her commitment to leading the organization into an expanded and more visible future.

Hughes offered several recommendations for the Board's consideration in future budget cycles, noting these were not intended to affect the current cycle, but future suggestions:

- Hughes suggested the Board distinguish between tourism-related programmatic deliverables and internal organizational management decisions, noting that some current scope-of-work language — such as requiring a fundraising event without tying it to tourism outcomes or providing funding for it — crosses into organizational governance which he did not feel the Tourism Board should try to dictate.
- Hughes recommended shifting to three-year contract agreements, subject to annual budget adoption and available revenues, with built-in accountability measures including annual reporting, mid-cycle performance reviews, defined impact metrics, and modification or termination clauses. He argued that multi-year commitments would provide contract partners with planning stability and would strengthen their ability to secure grant funding from outside sources, as funders view a multi-year public commitment as a signal of financial security.
- Hughes noted that, based on the most recent audit, the Tourism Board ended the fiscal year with a net position of approximately \$517,000 against a budget of \$539,000, representing nearly a full year's operating cash. He pointed out that the Board currently has no formal fund balance policy and suggested adopting one. He suggested as part of that policy development, defining in advance which priorities would be protected in the event of an economic downturn or natural disaster. He emphasized that the Tourism Board receives revenues monthly through the food and beverage tax, and therefore in his opinion does not require as long a cash runway, meaning available funds for tourism programs may be greater than currently recognized.

In discussion, Member Scott Czechlewski asked whether a three-year contract structure would concern Hughes given the potential for unexpected cost increases year over year. Hughes responded that it would not, explaining that well-structured multi-year contracts typically include mechanisms to request additional funding for specified purposes, as well as early termination provisions for both parties. The key benefit, he noted, is establishing a funding floor that supports organizational planning. Manager Campbell noted that she would explore these ideas further in the fall with the Tourism Board, within the applicable legal framework.

#### **B. Public Hearing for the draft FY27 budget**

Vice-Chair Pruitt called for a motion to open the public hearing.

Motion: Member Kimball moved to open the public hearing of the draft FY27 budget. Commissioner Darab seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

#### **Updates from Hillsborough Arts Council (HAC)**

Heather Tatreau, Executive Director of the Hillsborough Arts Council, addressed the Board. She explained that the HAC had initially requested \$75,000 from the Tourism Board. The Tourism Development Authority (TDA) agreed to absorb \$10,000 of that amount for the Solstice Lantern Walk, reducing the HAC's Tourism Board request to \$65,000, which was reflected in a budget amendment.

Subsequently, the HAC learned that the Hillsborough Town Board of Commissioners intends to reduce and ultimately eliminate its direct arts funding for FY28 and beyond, with the expectation that the Tourism Board and TDA would absorb visitor-focused programming costs. The Town Board reduced the HAC's town-side ask from \$17,800 to \$15,000 — a shortfall of \$2,800. Additionally, Orange County is cutting arts funding this cycle

due to their own budgeting shortfalls; the HAC had anticipated applying for a \$5,000 grant from the Orange County Arts Commission for performers in the Handmade Parade, but that grant opportunity has been eliminated.

Tatreau noted that the HAC intends to absorb the Orange County shortfall if necessary, but the \$2,800 town board funding gap is what she was bringing to the Tourism Board's attention. In discussion, Board members and Tatreau confirmed that the total funding needed to make the HAC able to fully do its planned events — including both the Town shortfall and the eliminated Orange County grant for performers — is \$7,800 above the current draft Tourism Board allocation of \$65,000, bringing the total HAC request to \$72,800.

Member Rainbow Cabbage noted that the Arts Council has historically demonstrated a strong tourism return on investment and argued the Board should make up the shortfall to keep visitors coming to town.

Motion: Member Czechlewski moved to add \$7,800 to the HAC's allocation. Member Cabbage seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

### **Draft FY27 Budget Updates**

Campbell provided an overview of the revised draft FY27 budget. She noted that, in light of funding pressures on contract partners from reductions from both the Town Board and Orange County, she had trimmed the Tourism Board's budget to be as lean as possible. Several previously proposed three-way partnership projects (splitting costs between the Tourism Board, the Town, and the TDA) were removed. The Town assumed responsibility for shelter projects in parks and entrance improvements at Riverwalk. A \$14,000 allocation for a website update in partnership with the TDA was retained, with Campbell noting the organization's website needs modernization and better ADA accessibility. The Board expressed support for retaining the website update funding.

Campbell confirmed that the Board has sufficient fund balance to cover the budget as drafted, including the additional \$7,800 for the HAC, and that dipping into fund balance by approximately \$54,000 would be fine given the Board's healthy fund balance.

### **Contract Partner Responses/Budgets for FY27; updates from HAC and Alliance**

Member Kimball recuses herself from the discussion as she is on the board of the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough.

Dani McIvor, representing the Alliance, addressed the Board regarding an updated funding request. She explained that when the original budget was submitted in early Spring, the Alliance had not yet received its health insurance premium renewal from its healthcare provider. The anticipated increase of 3–5% turned out to be approximately 10%, a significant and unexpected change. To address this, the Alliance explored switching to the Chamber Health Plan, which pools participants and is expected to provide more stability against large premium spikes given the Alliance's small staff of three covered employees.

As a result of the increased insurance costs, the Alliance's original ask of \$271,921 increased to \$272,984. McIvor presented the Board with options: maintain the full ask of \$272,984 (which includes the Solstice Lantern Walk shuttle service), or reduce to \$271,157 by cutting the shuttle. She framed the shuttle as the most straightforward item to cut. She indicated that the Alliance would be more comfortable with the Tourism Board making this decision.

Board members were broadly opposed to cutting the shuttle. Member Czechlewski expressed support for retaining it, citing the value of seamless event access. McIvor noted the shuttle received positive feedback from riders and business owners in West Hillsborough, particularly for its role in drawing visitors across both sides of town. She acknowledged that first-year ridership was modest — fewer than 250 passengers — but attributed this largely to limited public awareness. Board members noted that 200 riders represents roughly 100 fewer cars in downtown, that the cost-per-rider is consistent with subsidized transit norms, and that second-year ridership should improve with better marketing. Member Darab expressed confidence in the shuttle's potential given the expanded restaurant access in West Hillsborough.

Campbell confirmed that the full ask of \$272,984 was already reflected in the draft budget, and that no motion was needed to change the amount — only confirmation that the Board wished to retain the shuttle and/or not modify that amount.

Motion: Member Czechlewski moved to confirm the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough's FY27 visitor center operations allocation at \$272,984, inclusive of the Solstice Lantern Walk shuttle service. Member Darab seconded.

Vote: 6-0. Member Kimball abstained from the vote.

### **Budget Adoption Recommendation**

Campbell summarized the final FY27 budget and projects as amended:

- Burwell School Historic Site: \$85,000
- Hillsborough Arts Council: \$72,800
- Alliance for Visitor Services (visitor center operations): \$272,984
- Website update (in partnership with TDA): \$14,000

Campbell noted she would update the figures for presentation to the Town Board the following week.

Motion: Member Kimball moved to recommend the FY27 Tourism Board budget as written, with modifications made during the meeting. Member Cabbage seconded.

Vote: 7-0.

## **5. Staff and Board member updates/comments**

### **A. FY26 F&B tax report to date**

Campbell reported that food and beverage tax revenues continue to look strong. She noted that the Tourism Board receives revenue monthly from the Town, though on a two-to-three-month lag, and that the Board appears on track to close FY26 at a slightly higher level than FY27.

Campbell also proposed hosting future Tourism Board meetings at contract partner sites in the fall/winter, allowing members to tour the facilities and conduct their business on-site. She confirmed that such meetings would remain public meetings and that appropriate advance notice would be provided in accordance with NC Public Meeting Law. Board members expressed enthusiasm for the idea.

Commissioner Kimball noted that this would be her final meeting on the Board, as the Alliance would be represented by a new designee going forward. The Board expressed appreciation for her service.

## **6. Adjournment**

Vice-Chair Pruitt adjourned the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dakotah Kimbrough  
Planning Technician  
Staff support to the Hillsborough Tourism Board

Approved: August 31, 2026

DRAFT



# Hillsborough Tourism Board FY2026 Contract Bi-annual Report & Evaluation



|                                                                  |                                                   |                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Organization Information</b>                                  |                                                   |                 |
| Organization Name: Burwell School Historic Site                  |                                                   |                 |
| Contract Contact Person and Title: Elizabeth Hays, Site Director |                                                   |                 |
| Contact Person Email: burwellsc@gmail.com                        | Contact Person Phone: 919-732-7451                |                 |
| Organization Street Address: 319 N Churton St                    |                                                   |                 |
| City: Hillsborough                                               | State: NC                                         | ZIP Code: 27278 |
| Organization's TOTAL Annual Operating Budget: \$171,937          |                                                   |                 |
| <b>Contract General Information</b>                              |                                                   |                 |
| July-December Report or January-June                             | TOTAL Amount of YEARLY Contract Funding: \$65,000 |                 |

## Outline/Overview of the organization's tourism events/programs/activities to-date:

### July

- Closed for HVAC repair (July 1-15)
- ASHES Lab (July 31)
  - The Burwell School hosted the ASHES Lab from NC State for a DNA and oral history collection event. ASHES works with African diaspora communities to study genetic diversity and lived experiences of historical African American populations and their modern descendants. 50 people attended.

### August

- Star Party (August 29)
  - We hosted a free community event in alignment with the Hillsborough Arts Council's Last Friday program. Guests were invited to set up chairs and blankets on our expansive front lawn, observe the stars with the help of the Chapel Hill Astronomical Observation Society, and indulge in Whit's Frozen Custard.

### September

- Jan Irwin Book Release (September 6)
  - Former Burwell board member and local author Jan Irwin held a book release party and reading for her children's historical fiction book, *Finding Your Place*. Free programming included games, snacks, a reading, and more. 30 people attended.

### October

- Fall Festival (October 5)
  - This event was originally scheduled for September 27, but was postponed due to forecasted storms. It featured local vendors, performances by the Monroe School of Highland Dance, a pie contest, and more. One highlight was the launch of our federally funded historic comic books, with four brand-new stories about historical figures designed to excite and inspire young readers. 210 people attended.
- Halloween at Burwell (October 24)
  - Our regular Halloween event features crafts for children and Halloween-themed tours, led by costumed interpreters. Free to all! 78 people attended – our most successful year yet.
- ASHES Lab (October 25)
  - We were lucky to host the ASHES Lab once again for another session of DNA and oral history collection. 35 people attended.

### November

- November was dominated by group tours, including two large student groups of several hundred students each and a special tour for the archivist at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston.

### December

- Holiday Tours (December 6 – 21)
  - Burwell offered special holiday-themed tours in the month of December. Guests could learn about the Burwell family's Christmas traditions, surprising connections to singer James



Taylor, and the holiday celebrations the enslaved Black members of the household may have practiced.

- We opened from 3-8pm on December 6 in alignment with the Alliance's Tinsel and Traditions holiday home tours.
- Gossip and Rumor in Antebellum Hillsborough (December 14)
  - We welcomed former Burwell board member and historian Dr. Sylvia Hoffert for a free author talk and book reading for her newest book, *Wagging Tongues and Tittle Tattle: Gossip, Rumor, and Reputation in a Small Southern Town*.
- Candlelit Toast (December 16)
  - This ticketed event featured wine and desserts, a beautifully decorated atmosphere, and live harp music. Postponed from the original date of 12/9 due to snow and ice.

#### February

- "Untold Stories" Black History in Our Backyard (February 28)
  - This free event held in partnership with Mt. Bright Baptist Church featured an engaging conversation with Judge Beverly Scarlett and historian Ronne Warner spotlighting local Black historical figures through the voices of their descendants. This event welcomed over 100 guests.

#### June

- Partner site for Preservation NC's "Ramble" (June 6)
  - Preservation North Carolina's Rambles hosted a self-guided day tour of Hillsborough, NC. Tourists explored historic homes, commercial spaces, and local landmarks inside and out at their pace. This special event highlighted unique architecture and hidden community histories, often featuring properties not normally open to the public. This event saw over 100 out of town guests visit our site throughout the day.

Please explain how the organization successfully promoted tourism in Hillsborough in this part of the fiscal year:

- The Burwell School Historic Site continues to attract visitors from Orange County, North Carolina, and beyond, with guests visiting from as far away as Paris and Australia. Our recent efforts to restore our rare 1837 brick schoolhouse and 3-seat brick necessary have made the BSHS a destination site for preservation enthusiasts. Additionally, our connection to the nationally important figure of Elizabeth Keckly attracts scholars, book groups, and students from all over.
- During FY26, the BSHS strove to offer new and exciting interpretations that would appeal to first-time and repeat visitors alike. The hiring of a new Research Specialist has allowed a greater focus on expanded research and new exhibits. In FY26, she has created exhibits on the Collins family, the Strudwick family, and Christmas traditions at the Burwell School.
- Social media presence has expanded our reach to encourage tourists outside of Hillsborough to visit our town.

#### Contract Partner Tourism Impact

Please estimate the number of residents the contract partner served for this part of the year: ~895

Please estimate the number of tourists the contract partner brought to Hillsborough this part of the year: ~1,631

Please describe how the actual number of residents and tourists served was measured (i.e. 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):

Inspired by the Arts Council, we instituted a new tracking system this fiscal year. All guests are greeted at the door by a Burwell staff member, who asks them where they are visiting from. The staff member then tallies the number of guests in the appropriate column on our tracking sheet – from Hillsborough, from Chapel Hill/Carrboro, or from outside Orange County. This has allowed us to more accurately measure the number of residents and tourists served.

Our system is not perfect, as there are times when ascertaining a guest's hometown is not possible, such as large events. We will continue to work to gather more specific data.

Please describe how the contract partner joined with local hotel/motels to increase occupancy rates (if applicable):

n/a

Please describe how the organization partnered and informed local businesses of the partner's events/program/exhibits/etc. (if applicable):

- The Burwell School aims to regularly collaborate with and support local businesses. We partnered with Purple Crow to sell books at Jan Irwin and Sylvia Hoffert's book events and worked with Whit's Frozen Custard to provide treats at our Star Party.
- Our advertising efforts for Burwell events and programs engage local businesses through social media, in-person flyers and conversations, and other methods.
- We also share our events through the Chamber of Commerce and the Town Calendars.
- We regularly encourage visitors to patronize local businesses after their visit to the Burwell School Historic Site.

Please calculate the overall economic impact of any events/programs held (if applicable):

|                                                           |                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How many volunteers did the contract partner utilize: ~45 | How many volunteer hours were logged at the contract partner: ~954.5 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|



## Bi-annual Reflections

Please explain some 'successes' and/or things that went well and some preliminary ideas on how the organization can expand on those in the following part of the year or in the next fiscal year:

- Our school and group tours program continued to be successful through the efforts of our Visitor Services Coordinator. In November alone, we welcomed 450 students on scheduled group tours. We are exploring ways to expand outreach and programming for K-12 students.
- Burwell also continued to expand its educational offerings. We installed three new, visually appealing exhibits focused on the Collins family, the Strudwick family, and on Christmas traditions. Our new TV cart setup allows us to display digital exhibits as well, expanding opportunities for fresh and exciting educational displays.
- Burwell developed a positive working relationship with the ASHES Lab from NC State. We have been lucky to host two DNA collection events and look forward to continuing to partner with them.
- In the second half of the year, we hired both a new Site Director and part-time Visitor & Historic Services Coordinator, 4 new docents, and onboarded 7 new commissioners. We are excited to enter a new chapter in FY27 with potential rebranding in the next few months.
- Throughout this period of organizational transition, we continue to actively engage our community & strength local and statewide partnerships. We partnered with Preservation North Carolina to welcome visitors during its townwide "Ramble" event, participated with the Orange County Arts Commission in America 250 programming at River Park on July 4<sup>th</sup>, and are partnering with the Alliance to host a tea in conjunction with the upcoming "Outlandish" weekend.
- We continue to grow our regular programming after a brief hiatus due to the loss of our only full-time employee in January. We are now holding weekly "Making on the Porch" & "Journalling on the Porch." We also offer monthly "Camp Keckly" afternoon of learning and crafts designed for children and families. All of these events are free of charge. We will hold our annual "Star Party" during Last Friday on August 28<sup>th</sup>, which is a well-loved free community event on our lawn supported by the CHAOS Astronomy organization. Fall programming includes a November 7 lawn concert in conjunction with WHUP and a November 15<sup>th</sup> educational presentation on historic bricks led by commissioner and preservationist Peter Sandbeck.
- Looking ahead to FY26-27, we have finally established an official "Development Committee" to assist our Finance & Operations Director in planning our annual giving campaign. We have also set the date for our annual auction fundraiser, to be held on May 1. We also have a committee developing new arts and cultural programming that reflects and supports our evolving identity incorporating a potential center honoring Elizabeth Keckly. In addition, we have applied to serve as a host site for a travelling exhibition from the Smithsonian, honoring the indigenous culture of the US and our community.

Please explain any ways that the organization ran into unexpected roadblocks or difficulties and/or some preliminary ideas on how the organization can overcome those in the future (if applicable):

- Unfortunately, both HVAC units at the Burwell School went kaput in the middle of June. We were forced to close until the issue could be remedied, as temperatures in the house exceeded 90 degrees. The BSHS was closed until July 16 due to this issue.
- Weather wreaked havoc on several of our larger events this year. Both the Fall Festival and Candlelit Toast were postponed due to inclement weather, impacting our attendance.
- Budgetary constraints limit the scale of our events and programming.
- The second half of FY25-26 presented exceptional challenges for our organizations as our Site Coordinator – our ONLY full-time employee and primary organizer of our major annual fundraiser – left the organization. We also saw the “retirement” of several long-serving commissioners, as well as the resignations of several docents who were graduation from college. During this transition, our 2 part-time staff members stepped in to manage site operations, ensure docent coverage, facilitate communications and reporting, and maintain continuity, all while fulfilling their own responsibilities. Their efforts allowed the organization to continue serving both the local community and visitors; however, limited staffing capacity made it difficult to pursue programmatic growth and development during this period.



Please explain how the organization marketed and promoted themselves as a tourism destination and/or promoted their events/programming/projects for this part of the year (please include copies or photos of any flyers, advertisements run, banners/signs printed and hung, and any press coverage the project may have received):

- The BSHS produces informative rack cards that we distribute to partner organizations and businesses around Hillsborough. Additionally, we keep in stock our 2 newest pamphlets: "Expanding the Narrative" and "History in Bloom." These pamphlets provide historical information while encouraging visitors to visit the Burwell School for themselves.
- The Burwell School Historic Site maintains a robust presence on Instagram, Facebook, and our website. This content is intended to promote BSHS events and to share interesting historical education. Our digital presence is critical to reaching potential visitors outside of Hillsborough and engaging visitors who might not otherwise be able to travel to our site. Only 15.5% of our Facebook audience and 29.2% of our Instagram audience is located in Hillsborough, making social media outreach an essential component of our marketing strategy.
- We utilize local digital calendars such as INDY Week and Triangle on the Cheap to advertise Burwell events to visitors around the Triangle.
- We continue to send out monthly newsletters to promote Burwell and maintain regular communication with our audience. Staff has expanded our newsletter and continued marketing Burwell and Hillsborough as a tourism destination by reaching out to other local businesses regularly to include upcoming events and announcements. This provides quality information for readers and helps establish a partnership among private and nonprofit organizations in Hillsborough.
- In partnership with Mt. Bright Baptist Church, we hosted over 100 guests for our "Untold Stories" event celebrating Black History month. We jointly promoted this annual event through targeted printed promotion, as well as broader social media postings. (See marketing flyer below).



# UNTOLD STORIES

## BLACK HISTORY IN OUR BACKYARD

An engaging conversation  
spotlighting local Black  
historical figures through the  
voices of their descendants.

**FEBRUARY 28, 2026**

2:00 pm

Mount Bright Baptist Church

For more information, visit  
[www.burwellschool.org/events](http://www.burwellschool.org/events)

  
**ORANGE COUNTY**  
NORTH CAROLINA



**BURWELL SCHOOL**  
*Historic Site*



**Judge Beverly  
Scarlett**



**Ronnie Warner**



**Budget Adjustments or Updates** (if applicable- do not include if there are no changes and things are right on budget. This is an opportunity to let the board know of any big changes per the contract.)

| a. Item                                                                                                                           | b. Amount Needed via Contract Funding in FY26 (for each item) | c. Amount Contributed by Organization (for each item) | d. Other Funding Sources | e. Total Contract Budget (add columns b-d) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Ex: Revolutionary War Re-enactors                                                                                                 | Ex: \$1,000                                                   | Ex: \$2,000                                           |                          |                                            |
| I.e. Personnel Costs- .5 FTE- Part Time Coordinator (10 hours p/w)                                                                | Ex: \$6,500                                                   | Ex: \$1,000                                           | Ex: \$500                | \$8,000                                    |
| 1. Operations- Utilities                                                                                                          | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 2. Operations- Staffing/Administration Site Manager (30 hours per week @ \$15.00 per hour) = \$23,400                             | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 3. Operations- Insurance/Safety Items                                                                                             | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 4. Advertising- Social Media/Online                                                                                               | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 5. Advertising- Print Ads, Brochures, Postcards                                                                                   | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 6. Data Processing- Website Maintenance, E newsletters                                                                            | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 7. Exhibits/Displays/Attraction Development                                                                                       | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 8. Special Projects/Events Admin                                                                                                  | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 9. Bands                                                                                                                          | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 10.                                                                                                                               | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 11.                                                                                                                               | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 12.                                                                                                                               | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 13.                                                                                                                               | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 14.                                                                                                                               | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 15.                                                                                                                               | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| <b>TOTALS</b><br>(sum of each column)                                                                                             | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| <b>** PLEASE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SHEETS (USING THE SAME FORMAT) IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH ROOM TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR FULL BUDGET **</b> |                                                               |                                                       |                          |                                            |
|                                                                                                                                   |                                                               |                                                       |                          |                                            |

## Signatures

I hereby certify that the information contained in this bi-annual report is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false or misleading information may disqualify this organization from receiving future funding from the Tourism Board.

### BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Signature: /s/ Matt Hughes

Date: 08/24/2026

Printed Name: Matt Hughes

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: n/a

Signature:

Date:

Printed Name:

### CONTRACT CONTACT PERSON (if different than Executive Director)

Signature:

Date: 8/24/26

Printed Name: Elizabeth Hays

# ARTS & ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 5 CALCULATOR

## INSTRUCTIONS

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

Population of your community:

Total Expenses: \$

Total Attendance:

[CALCULATE](#)

[RESET](#)

[PRINT](#)

## TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

|                  | TOTAL EXPENDITURES                     | FTE JOBS                       | HOUSEHOLD INCOME                      | LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE             | STATE GOVERNMENT REVENUE             |
|------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ORGANIZATION(S): | <input type="text" value="\$62,919"/>  | <input type="text" value="2"/> | <input type="text" value="41,128"/>   | <input type="text" value="\$1,787"/> | <input type="text" value="\$3,193"/> |
| AUDIENCES:       | <input type="text" value="\$49,618"/>  | <input type="text" value="1"/> | <input type="text" value="\$21,507"/> | <input type="text" value="\$2,051"/> | <input type="text" value="\$2,955"/> |
| TOTAL:           | <input type="text" value="\$112,537"/> | <input type="text" value="3"/> | <input type="text" value="\$62,635"/> | <input type="text" value="\$3,838"/> | <input type="text" value="\$6,148"/> |

## Definitions

### Total Expenditures:

The total dollars spent by your nonprofit arts and cultural organization and its audiences; event-related spending by cultural audiences is estimated using the average dollars spent per person, per event by cultural attendees in similarly populated communities.

### FTE Jobs:

The total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in your community that are supported by the expenditures made by your arts and cultural organization and/or its audiences. An FTE job can be one full-time employee, two half-time employees, etc. Economists measure FTE jobs, not the total number of employees, because it is a more accurate measure that accounts for part-time employment.

### Household Income:

The total dollars paid to community residents as a result of the expenditures made by your arts and cultural organization and/or its audiences. Household income includes salaries, wages, and entrepreneurial income paid to residents. It is the money residents earn and use to pay for food, shelter, utilities, and other living expenses.

### Government Revenue:

The total dollars received by your local and state governments as a result of the expenditures made by your arts and cultural organization and/or its audiences. Government revenue includes revenue from local and state taxes (e.g., income, sales, lodging, real estate, personal property, and other local option taxes) as well as funds from license fees, utility fees, filing fees, and other similar sources. Local government revenue includes funds to governmental units such as city, county, township, and school districts, and other special districts.

When using estimates derived from this calculator, always keep the following caveats in mind: (1) the results of this analysis are based upon the averages of similarly populated communities, (2) a unique input-output model was customized for each of these similarly populated communities, providing very specific employment, household income, and government revenue data, and (3) your results are therefore estimates, and should not be used as a substitute for conducting an economic impact study that is customized for your community.

[Explanation of Calculator Methodology \(.pdf, 333 KB\)](#)

[\(/sites/default/files/pdf/2017/by\\_program/reports\\_and\\_data/UnderstandingTheAEP5Calculator.pdf\)](#)

Signature: 

Email: [mghughesnc@gmail.com](mailto:mghughesnc@gmail.com)

# FY26 HTB Report Final

Final Audit Report

2026-08-24

|                 |                                              |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Created:        | 2026-08-24                                   |
| By:             | Katherine Kirschner (kirschnerkat@gmail.com) |
| Status:         | Signed                                       |
| Transaction ID: | CBJCHBCAABAAL9Gdh_iOnHgB2ulXa8lOXM1yESA61-P0 |

## "FY26 HTB Report Final" History

-  Document created by Katherine Kirschner (kirschnerkat@gmail.com)  
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-  Document emailed to Matt Hughes (mghughesnc@gmail.com) for signature  
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-  Agreement completed.  
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# Hillsborough Tourism Board FY2026 Contract Bi-annual Report & Evaluation



|                                                                               |                                                           |                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Organization Information</b>                                               |                                                           |                        |
| Organization Name: <b>Hillsborough Arts Council (HAC)</b>                     |                                                           |                        |
| Contract Contact Person and Title: <b>Heather Tatreau, Executive Director</b> |                                                           |                        |
| Contact Person Email:<br><b>director@hillsboroughartscouncil.org</b>          | Contact Person Phone: <b>919-593-4295</b>                 |                        |
| Organization Street Address: <b>102 N Churton Street</b>                      |                                                           |                        |
| City: <b>Hillsborough</b>                                                     | State: <b>NC</b>                                          | ZIP Code: <b>27278</b> |
| Organization's TOTAL Annual Operating Budget: <b>\$356,800</b>                |                                                           |                        |
| <b>Contract General Information</b>                                           |                                                           |                        |
| July-December Report or <b>January-June?</b><br>(Mark one)                    | TOTAL Amount of YEARLY Contract Funding: <b>\$ 70,000</b> |                        |

*Outline/Overview of the organization's tourism events/programs/activities to-date:*

- Gallery & Gift Shop: Open Tuesday-Sunday; 11am-6pm (year-round)
- Last Fridays & the Art Walk, featuring a Maker's Market, Live on the Lawn Performance Series, and Creation Station on the Old Courthouse Lawn, as well as the Art Walk with 30 venues in downtown and West Hillsborough:
  - July 25 (Art is for Everyone theme)
  - August 29 (Hometown Fun with the Shoaldiggers)
  - September 26 (Fall Fashion Show)
  - October 31 (Halloween in Hillsborough)
  - November 28 (Black Friday/Shop Small Weekend)
  - January 30, February 27, March 27 (Art Walk marketing support)
  - April 24 (Spring Fashion Show)
  - May 29 (Living Arts Collective on the lawn)
  - June 26 (Celebrating Community Voices with the Magic of African Rhythm)
- Puppet Making Workshops in preparation for Handmade Parade (July 11, Aug 15, May 15, June 12)
- Gallery After Hours receptions (Aug 21, March 19)
- House Concerts (Sept 14, February 15, May 3)
- Cocktails & Crafts Art Kit Party at the Rookery (Oct 11, April 16)
- Lantern making workshops in preparation for Solstice Lantern Walk (November 16 & 28)
- Solstice Lantern Walk & Market (December 20)

*Please explain how the organization successfully promoted tourism in Hillsborough in this part of the fiscal year:*

The Hillsborough Arts Council is proud to serve our mission of building community through the arts while driving tourism, economic impact, and public engagement with all art forms. This year, we continued to focus on fostering strong relationships across cultural organizations, businesses, local artists, neighborhoods, and schools in Hillsborough and Orange County. Our triangle-wide marketing efforts were used to attract the attention of residents outside of Hillsborough to our large community events and patronize downtown businesses.

The **HAC Gallery & Gift Shop (GGS)** is open 6 days/week with extended hours on Last Fridays to contribute to Hillsborough's nightlife and offer visitors a fun shopping experience and tourist resource while they are in town for the event. *7,578 people came through GGS in Q1/Q2, and 5,384 in Q3/Q4 for a total of **almost 13,000 patrons this fiscal year.*** Our data shows that **66-73% of patrons reside outside of Hillsborough with 57% residing outside of Orange County**, offering a great opportunity for our shop staff and volunteers to promote Hillsborough as a tourist destination. The bulletin board outside our shop is kept up to date with local upcoming events around town.

With this being an off year for the **Handmade Parade**, we focused on **Puppet Making Workshops** to build community interest and engagement for the next time we hold the Parade. There is also a need for more community puppets in the parade since we lost all of ours to mold and flooding in our storage facility. In Q1, we contracted 1,2,3 Puppetry's Sol Ramirez to lead 2 workshops at the Scrap Exchange in Durham. Our partnership with The Scrap Exchange allowed us to use their space and thus reach more Durham residents in the promotion of the Handmade Parade. In Q4, we hosted 2 more Puppet Making Workshops with Sol at Snow Approach Foundation in Hillsborough. *We had a total of **35 participants** in our Handmade Parade puppetry workshops, with **57% of them residing outside of Hillsborough**.* We welcomed participants from places such as Cary and Greensboro that will return for our larger HAC events.

**Last Fridays & the Art Walk** (LFAW) has been structured to entice repeat visitation month after month and to encourage tourists and locals alike to build LFAW as recurring events into their monthly social calendars. This also ensures tourism boosts during the Last Friday of each month and drives spending at restaurants, local businesses, bars, and art galleries. Art Walk venues are asked each month to share information about special Last Friday happenings with us so we can promote them in a one-page itinerary for patrons. This year, we introduced the **Live on the Lawn Performance Series** to provide 3 hours of live entertainment: music, poetry, improv, puppetry, or even a community fashion show. This new element has attracted consistent crowds to the lawn each month, with up to **300 attendees** at a time. We have used this platform to showcase the Hillsborough Poet Laureate, popular bands like The Shoaldiggers, culturally diverse musical groups like The Magic of African Rhythm and Taiko Club, as well as participatory entertainment like a drum circle and flashmob. HAC ensured that attendees of all ages found plenty to do by also programming other consistent elements on the Old Courthouse Lawn such as the Makers Markets, Creation Station (a free art making table), poetry play boxes, and a giant community loom.

*We estimate that **14,200 visitors** attended Last Fridays & the Art Walk in FY26.* Our special seasonally themed months have proven successful in drawing crowds with themes like October's Halloween in Hillsborough and November's Shop Small Weekend.

The HAC staff-led lantern make and take craft, located at Snow Approach Foundation during November's Last Friday & the Art Walk, provided an opportunity to create a free lantern for the Solstice Lantern Walk and attracted **60 participants**. An additional artist-led **Felt Lantern Making Workshop** was held in November to promote the Solstice Lantern Walk. ***Out of the 20 participants for this paid workshop, over half were from outside of Hillsborough.*** This event helped to spread the word about our much larger event and get folks excited to come back on December 20th for the walk.

We estimate that **5,000-6,000 people attended** the 2025 **Solstice Lantern Walk & Market** (SLW), which were similar numbers as last year. We were successful in getting a large number of participants to register for this free event, which allows us to collect data and donations. 2,942 people registered to walk in the event and 711 people registered to watch the event, for a total of 3,653 registrants. **73% of registrants reside outside of Hillsborough, with 43% residing outside of Orange County. One quarter of registrants came from Durham.** This data shows us that we are effectively marketing the Solstice Lantern Walk beyond Hillsborough by attracting a significant out of town population, particularly in Durham. We also feel confident that we have created an event that appeals to all ages. Demographic data show that 24% of attendees were under 16, 61% were ages 16-64, and 15% were 65+.

Some **new additions** to our event calendar this year include Gallery After Hours, the House Concert series, and Cocktails & Crafts. Each of these events provide more intimate gatherings of our supporters to promote community-building and fundraising opportunities.

#### Contract Partner Tourism Impact

Please estimate the number of residents the contract partner served for this part of the year:

**Q1/Q2: 8,000**

**Q3/Q4: 4,570**

Please estimate the number of tourists the contract partner brought to Hillsborough this part of the year:

**Q1/Q2: 15,000**

**Q3/Q4: 5,230**



*Please describe how the actual number of residents and tourists served was measured (ie. registration/pre-registration, ticket sales either prior to the event or at the event gates, via turnstile data, counters from volunteers, wristband tracking, counts at the site):*

We use a variety of methods to collect attendance data and geographical information from our program attendees:

**Gallery & Gift Shop:** A clicker counter is used for total visitation to the shop. Geographical information is collected via in-person surveying. Staff and volunteers are trained to strike up conversations that allow them to determine where patrons reside and then record this on a tally sheet. At least 20% of GGS patrons are surveyed.

**Last Fridays & the Art Walk:** Since these events involve large, unticketed, disbursed crowds around the entire downtown area, actual numbers to these free events are difficult to collect. Total attendance during the Last Fridays & the Art Walk event each month is estimated based on attendance reports at Art Walk venues, headcounts taken at entertainment and programming zones, and visitor counts (via clicker counter) at our info booth and art-making activities.

Last year, we experimented with collecting resident status information at the HAC Info Tent. We did this by engaging attendees in a fun game of dropping a puff ball in a jar that was labeled with various geographical information. They were given a mint for letting us know where they reside. Our data was consistent with the data collected at the GGS, bolstering our confidence that HAC programs attract on average about 25-35% residents of Hillsborough and 65-75% visitors from other towns/counties/states. We also look at website traffic and identify correlations between digital and in-person engagement with our activities.

**Solstice Lantern Walk & Market:** In marketing for SLW, we communicate that registration for this event is free but *required*. However, with such a large turn out, we are unable to check registration on site. We estimate that around 66% of attendees actually registered. In the registration form, we ask for information about town and county residence, age, and race so that we can collect demographic data (please note that the question about race is optional and follows DEI standards). On the day of the event, volunteers conducted spot checks of various programming areas and compared these to last year's headcounts. Website traffic also informs our estimates. All of this data combined is what helped us determine our day-of attendance.

**Workshops:** Our 5 paid workshops allowed us an opportunity to collect total headcounts and demographics information during the online registration process.

*Please describe how the contract partner joined with local hotel/motels to increase occupancy rates (if applicable):*

The Colonial Inn is a participating venue for the **Last Fridays & the Art Walk** season. They hosted live music in their courtyard, dinner specials, and activities as part of this monthly event. The Colonial Inn is promoted in our ongoing marketing, showcasing this premier hotel choice for anyone wanting to extend their stay at a HAC event to spend the weekend in historic Hillsborough. We also ensure that all three Hillsborough hotels (Colonial Inn, Microtel, and Holiday Inn Express) are stocked with Last Friday brochures throughout the season.

For the **Solstice Lantern Walk & Market**, HAC promoted the "Make it a Weekend" campaign, encouraging out-of-town Solstice participants to stay overnight after the event on Saturday night. We did this in several ways:

1. a collaboration with the Colonial Inn for a discount on overnight stays
2. Solstice Lantern Walk brochures at the Holiday Inn Express and Microtel in Hillsborough
3. cross promotion with the Chamber and The Alliance/Visit Hillsborough to encourage overnight stays and downtown shopping the next day during the holiday season
4. social media posts, e-newsletters, and website content listing ways to "Make it a Weekend" for the Solstice Lantern Walk, including web links to the 3 hotels in town

*Please describe how the organization partnered and informed local businesses of the partner's events/program/exhibits/etc. (if applicable):*

Local businesses were asked in January 2025 if they would like to become a participating venue in the **2025 Last Fridays & the Art Walk season**. Participating venues secured their spot in early Feb and were provided with monthly themes for inspiration and awareness of what HAC would be doing to boost visitation. Google forms, online web forms, etc. were used in follow-ups sent to venues each month with a final line-up of monthly activities and requests to get their details for cross promotion. Art Walk venue events were then included in a one-page LFAW itinerary for the public, in social media posts, and on the HAC website. Staff members hand delivered the one-pagers along with a restock of brochures each month to our Art Walk venues. HAC's website has also proven to be a reliable source for event information that is updated multiple times per month by our Marketing Coordinator to inform viewers of detailed activities.

For our **2026 LFAW season**, we decided to get back to our Art Walk roots by prioritizing gallery spaces and performance venues on the Art Walk. Staff members reached out to local businesses who had participated as a venue in the previous season to explain the change. We still encouraged downtown and West Hillsborough merchants to take advantage of the increase in foot traffic on Last Fridays by remaining open to the public for the duration of the event and including arts related programming to attract patrons. Businesses that remain open on Last Fridays often report an increase in visitation and sales as a result.

To communicate with local businesses about **LFAW and GGS** updates, HAC staff used direct emails, attended Merchant Association Meetings, stopped by businesses to discuss plans, scheduled recurring meetings to align with other cultural partners on opportunities for overlap, and posted dates to community partners' calendars as well as public-facing community event calendars around Hillsborough, Orange County, and the Triangle. HAC remains an active member of the Chamber and participates in downtown Merchant events. Our Gallery & Gift Shop Manager, Kim Freeman, seeks out partnerships with other merchants and has regular conversations with many downtown business owners.

In preparation of the **Solstice Lantern Walk & Market**, we began sharing “Save the Date” messaging in October 2025. We worked with our partners at the Chamber and Alliance to streamline the promotion of downtown merchants through a “Holidays in Hillsborough” campaign. We shared information on social media, our website, and in our e-newsletters about Shop Small Saturday, encouraged event participants to shop small all season long, and reshared promotional posts and local event calendars.

We partnered with Snow Approach Foundation this year to host many of our **workshops** in their downtown Hillsborough facility. This has been a fruitful partnership: we have been able to utilize free workshop space and they have increased visibility with our marketing of these events. We have also partnered with the Rookery and Yoder to create a creative community around our **Art Kits** by hosting Cocktails & Crafts events.

Please [calculate the overall economic impact](#) of any events/programs held (if applicable):

HAC’s total operating expenses for FY26 was \$352,500 and served approximately 32,800 people through our events and shop. Using the Arts and Economic Prosperity Calculator, HAC programming expenditures brought a total of \$76,177 in revenue for the state government and a total of \$50,468 in revenue for local government. 33 FTE positions were supported through our work, and a total of \$654,609 of household income was generated through our expenses. A total of \$978,636 was spent by our audiences as a result of our programming in FY26.

# ARTS & ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 5 CALCULATOR

## INSTRUCTIONS

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

Population of your community:

Total Expenses: \$

Total Attendance:

**CALCULATE** →

**RESET** →

**PRINT** →

## TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

|                         | TOTAL EXPENDITURES                       | FTE JOBS                        | HOUSEHOLD INCOME                       | LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE              | STATE GOVERNMENT REVENUE              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>ORGANIZATION(S):</b> | <input type="text" value="\$352,500"/>   | <input type="text" value="12"/> | <input type="text" value="\$230,419"/> | <input type="text" value="\$10,011"/> | <input type="text" value="\$17,889"/> |
| <b>AUDIENCES:</b>       | <input type="text" value="\$978,636"/>   | <input type="text" value="21"/> | <input type="text" value="\$424,190"/> | <input type="text" value="\$40,457"/> | <input type="text" value="\$58,288"/> |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>           | <input type="text" value="\$1,331,136"/> | <input type="text" value="33"/> | <input type="text" value="\$654,609"/> | <input type="text" value="\$50,468"/> | <input type="text" value="\$76,177"/> |

How many volunteers did the contract partner utilize:

**Q1/Q2: 220**

**Q3/Q4: 130**

How many volunteer hours were logged at the contract partner:

**Q1/Q2: 850**

**Q3/Q4: 600**

Bi-annual Reflections



*Please explain some 'successes' and/or things that went well and some preliminary ideas on how the organization can expand on those in the following part of the year or in the next fiscal year:*

The **HAC Gallery & Gift Shop** continues to serve our mission of supporting local artists while also encouraging the local tourist economy. Through the shop, HAC contributed **\$71,378 to local artist income in FY26 sales**, which was up from last year. We also explored some new revenue streams for our organization by selling art making kits (in addition to our Lantern Kits for SLW), donated art pieces, and community created art. We promoted gift card and gift basket sales as well through an increase in fun social media reel content. These are all efforts that we are starting to see results with and will continue to develop into the next fiscal year.

As an arts council, we aim to inspire creativity and an appreciation for the artistic process. GGS offers a great opportunity to lean into community arts education. Our giant loom proved to be a terrific way to engage the community while teaching about the artistic medium of weaving through contributing to a tapestry. It made its way to the lawn during many of our Last Fridays and attracted people into the shop by sitting in the front window. At the end of the 2025 Last Friday season, we took the community-woven tapestry off the loom and hung it in our gallery. Other successful community engagement elements in the GGS were the popular Art is for Everyone gallery exhibit featuring art work by all ages and skill levels, artist demonstrations in the window, digital displays of artist process videos, and Gallery After Hours events. We also partnered with the Rookery to host kit making parties, where we provided art kits for sale and the Rookery provided a fun space to gather with friends and make art out of the kit materials. We will continue to grow these events to promote our kits while supporting a local business.

**Last Fridays & the Art Walk** continues to draw crowds to downtown Hillsborough each month. The new *Live on the Lawn Performance Series* proved to be popular. We increased our performance budget through an OCAC grant in order to pay for larger well-known bands on the lawn, which drew larger crowds. We also experimented with a community fall fashion show that was more successful than we anticipated, drawing a crowd of 250 on the lawn! This allowed textile artists and local clothing shops to participate in a Last Friday event. We have decided to make this a recurring event, adding a spring fashion show during Q4. During the start of our 2026 Live on the Lawn series, we have already seen a consistent audience of around 300 people each month.

We continue to evaluate and improve the **Solstice Lantern Walk & Market** year over year, so attendees have a magical Hillsborough experience and plan to come each year. We brought back the popular elements that people have come to expect: lantern kits on sale in the GGS, a curated Maker's Market with 30 vendors, event lighting by Get Lit, live music at the Pavilion and along the walk, food trucks, a special Solstice Mug designed by a local artist, and CHAOS Sky Tours with giant telescopes. Some additions this year were a photo booth with professional portrait photographer Monica Meyer and free photo downloads, lighted dance performers in River Park, a silent auction of local artwork, and more music along the walk. We continue to receive feedback from artists that this is their best market of the season and from attendees that this event has become a seasonal family tradition!

We made several big improvements to the SLW this year:

- Not having a designated walk start time better dispersed the crowds so there were no lines waiting for the walk to begin. We heard overwhelmingly positive feedback about this adjustment. Also, we allowed people to enter and exit at multiple locations.
- Moving the event to the Saturday closest to Solstice allowed more families and volunteers to participate. We had a record number of volunteers sign up to help with event set up and break down.
- Creating a trifold brochure with an event map helped communicate the locations of all the event elements and ADA entrances.
- Outreach to the Fairview community through donation of lantern kits encouraged participation from a part of our community that has not traditionally attended the SLW.
- The addition of a circulator bus, managed by The Alliance, connected downtown and West Hillsborough. It was not widely used, but feedback was positive. We would like to try it again next year to alleviate parking congestion and connect the two ends of town.
- We partnered with our local police department to provide active shooter training to our staff and event volunteers. This, along with an increase in police presence during the SLW, added to the execution of a more secure event.

We solidified our approach to paid **Workshops** this fiscal year. We offered 4 puppet making workshops in preparation for the next Handmade Parade and 1 felt lantern making workshop prior to the SLW. By offering workshops associated with an upcoming HAC event, we have an opportunity to promote the event while encouraging community engagement and arts education. These offerings are also mission aligned because we are able to pay artists to teach the workshop. We will offer more puppet workshops leading up to the Handmade Parade in 2027 and will add more lantern workshops next year.

*Please explain any ways that the organization ran into unexpected roadblocks or difficulties and/or some preliminary ideas on how the organization can overcome those in the future (if applicable):*

We continue to have difficulty recruiting enough **event volunteers** to execute Last Fridays without overburdening our small staff and board members. Our Gallery & Gift Shop Manager has been successful in recruiting and retaining shop volunteers, but event volunteers require a different approach and represent a different demographic to tap into. We have recently hired a full time Events Coordinator with the expectation that he will spearhead efforts to solidify a sustainable event volunteer model. We may need to invest in a more robust digital method of volunteer management than what we are currently using.

We also experienced unexpected roadblocks when applying for **FY27 funding** from the Town of Hillsborough. Between Town and County funding decisions, we were looking at a deficit going forward. We truly appreciate the Tourism Board and Tourism Development Authority stepping in to make up this difference! We will continue to advocate for local funding in the future so that HAC can maintain its high quality community arts programming.

Marketing and Sustainability

*Please explain how the organization marketed and promoted themselves as a tourism destination and/or promoted their events/programming/projects for this part of the year (please include copies or photos of any flyers, advertisements run, banners/signs printed and hung, and any press coverage the project may have received):*

**HAC continues to promote events through:**

- Monthly e-newsletters with high open rates
- Social media and online calendar postings
- Print Media/Brochures/Fliers
- Signage/Banners
- Radio ads and interviews
- Cross-promotion and collaboration with artists, local businesses, and community partners
- Continually updated website

We continue to expand PR locally and regionally. HAC's events and event photography receive widespread attention and excitement from HAC's proprietary marketing, cross-promotional efforts, and organic news channels.

**EXAMPLES (more visuals will be provided via presentation during the meeting):**

- Monthly ad spot on WUNC-FM (Fresh Air) to promote LFAW/SLW
- LFAW season trifold brochure (with Art Walk venues, dates, QR code to info online, and map) distributed at key tourist/visitor stops and Art Walk venues
- Monthly LFAW banners at Welcome to Hillsborough and the Historic Orange County Courthouse banners on the week before and night of each event.
- New Solstice Lantern Walk & Market banners, placed prominently on the day of the event
- Monthly LFAW one-pager/event itinerary - branded, quick and easy to use info about what special programming we have rotating each month - shared online, at GGS, HAC info booth, and at art walk venues, with expanded distribution of flyers promoting specially-themed components
- The GGS and our monthly HAC info booth are hubs for other tourism materials and we have made space for signs and brochures as long as it aligns with our general mission to build community through the arts
- Community calendar listings - posted to 13+ calendars in the Triangle to promote our events
- FB events - created events for each event (SLW, LFAW, etc)
- 1,500 SLW trifold brochure with map distributed by staff and volunteers throughout Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Durham, Hillsborough, Pittsboro, and Graham
- Radio interviews with our Executive Director were aired on WHUP and The Hill WCHL with Aaron Keck to promote SLW
- Interviews with our staff published on the OCAC website, in the Daily TarHeel, and other news sources around town

**LFAW public-facing web-page for full monthly event details:** [www.LastFridays.org](http://www.LastFridays.org)

**SLW event details web-page:** <https://www.hillsboroughartscouncil.org/solstice>

[HAC Facebook Posts](#)

[HAC Instagram Posts](#)

[SLW Article](#)  
[WCHL Interview](#)

**HAC Programs in the MEDIA:**

Our tourism activities were featured by a variety of media/community partners, including the Alliance/Visit Hillsborough, Visit Chapel Hill, Chamber of Commerce, OCHM & Burwell School, Orange County Artist Commission, Town of Hillsborough, and more. Events were publicized in digital and print media, including coverage by WUNC, Indy Week, WRAL, CBS17, ABC11, WHUP, News of Orange, Chapel Hill Mag, Our State Mag, Triangle on the Cheap, Hulafrog, and more.

*Please provide any information on any fundraising the organization did and how that supports the long-term, sustainable, financial goals of the organization:*

Our board Development Committee and Executive Director worked together to solidify a more robust development plan and deepen relationships with our **business sponsors**. Our biggest sponsor did not renew this year, which was a \$10,000 loss. However, we maintained the rest of our sponsors, increased the giving level of one, and added an additional \$2,500 level sponsor. We also completed the transition to a new donor management system that is allowing us to track donor relationships better.

Several board-led events were held to build up our sustainer base and thank current sustainers. We held 2 **Gallery After Hours** events, inviting sustainers and sponsors to mingle in the gallery. We served refreshments and had artist demonstrations for our guests. We also hosted 3 **House Concerts** this year, which resulted in several new sustainers while offering a discounted ticket to current sustainers as a thank you. Bringing back the House Concerts (formerly known as Parlor Concerts) has re-engaged former HAC supporters, so we will continue to host 3 House Concerts each year. In FY26, we increased our sustainer program by 9%.

During our **LFAWs**, board members were stationed at the **HAC info booth** to educate attendees about HAC's mission and community reach. We have been more transparent about our funding sources, the cost of running free community programs, and the need for donor support.

We organized an **end of year fundraising campaign around SLW** with a goal of raising \$20,000 through donations at registration. We came very close to our goal and raised \$19,310 in individual donations. Coupling our end of year campaign with a very successful program like the SLW, was the key to our success and is a sustainable fundraising approach for HAC. We also held an **End of Fiscal Year Fundraising Campaign** with a goal of raising \$15,000. We exceeded this goal, raising \$17,700.

The **Gallery & Gift Shop** remains a source of fundraising. Patrons are given the opportunity to donate at check out by rounding up when making a purchase. We have also received several donated items from local artists who have allowed us to sell them and keep 100% of the revenue.



Our relationships with **Mary Duke Biddle Foundation and Triangle Community Foundation** have proven fruitful. We have gained a few new donors through TCF. The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation gave us an unexpected donation of \$15,000 in Q1, which allowed us to hire a part-time Events Coordinator. This major contribution increased our FY26 budget revenue *and* expenses by \$15,000.

**Budget Adjustments or Updates** (if applicable- do not include if there are no changes and things are right on budget. This is an opportunity to let the board know of any changes per the contract.)

| a. Item                                                                                                  | b. Amount Needed via Contract Funding in FY26 (for each item) | c. Amount Contributed by Organization (for each item) | d. Other Funding Sources | e. Total Contract Budget (add columns b-d) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                          |                                                               |                                                       |                          |                                            |
|                                                                                                          |                                                               |                                                       |                          |                                            |
| Operations- Utilities                                                                                    | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 2. Operations- Staffing/Administration<br>Site Manager (30 hours per week @ \$15.00 per hour) = \$23,400 | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 3. Operations- Insurance/Safety Items                                                                    | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 4. Advertising- Social Media/Online                                                                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 5. Advertising- Print Ads, Brochures, Postcards                                                          | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 6. Data Processing- Website Maintenance, E-newsletters                                                   | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 7. Exhibits/Displays/Attraction Development                                                              | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 8. Special Projects/Events Admin                                                                         | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 9. Bands                                                                                                 | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 10.                                                                                                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 11.                                                                                                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 12.                                                                                                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 13.                                                                                                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 14.                                                                                                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 15.                                                                                                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| <b>TOTALS</b><br>(sum of each column)                                                                    | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |

**\*\* PLEASE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SHEETS (USING THE SAME FORMAT) IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH ROOM TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR FULL BUDGET \*\***

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                 |
| <b>Signatures</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                 |
| I hereby certify that the information contained in this bi-annual report is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false or misleading information may disqualify this organization from receiving future funding from the Tourism Board. |                 |
| <b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                 |
| Signature (digital is fine):                                                                                                                                                                 | Date: 8/20/2026 |
| Printed Name: Heather L. Tatreau                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                 |
| <b>BOARD CHAIRPERSON</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                 |
| Signature (digital is fine): Julia Workman                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Date: 8/20/2026 |
| Printed Name: Julia Workman                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                 |
| <b>CONTRACT CONTACT PERSON (if different than Executive Director)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                 |
| Signature:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Date:           |
| Printed Name:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                 |

# Hillsborough Tourism Board FY2026 Contract Bi-annual Report & Evaluation



| Organization Information                                        |                                                   |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Organization Name: Orange County Historical Museum              |                                                   |                 |
| Contract Contact Person and Title: Catie Atkinson, Site Manager |                                                   |                 |
| Contact Person Email: manager@orangehistorync.org               | Contact Person Phone: (919) 732-2201              |                 |
| Organization Street Address: 201 N Churton Street               |                                                   |                 |
| City: Hillsborough                                              | State: NC                                         | ZIP Code: 27278 |
| Organization’s TOTAL Annual Operating Budget: \$151,520         |                                                   |                 |
| Contract General Information                                    |                                                   |                 |
| January-June                                                    | TOTAL Amount of YEARLY Contract Funding: \$59,500 |                 |

**Outline/Overview of the organization's tourism events/programs/activities to-date:**

The Orange County Historical Museum was very busy during Q3 and Q4, hosting a variety of programs and events. Some of these programs and events were held in town, either at the Museum or at other venues, while others were held outside of town for other organizations in an effort to share the Museum with a new audience who will hopefully visit the Museum in the future.

- 2/7/26 – Everything You Should Have Learned in High School about the Declaration of Independence, 56 attendees
- 2/14/26 – Everything You Should Have Learned in High School about the Articles of Confederation, 55 attendees
- 2/21/26 – Everything You Should Have Learned in High School about the Constitution, 68 attendees
- 3/7/26 – Magna Carta program, 46 attendees
- 3/14/26 – Anne Hooper plaque dedication program, 55 attendees
- 3/21/26 – Women's History program, 30 attendees
- 3/28/26 – John Adams program, 48 attendees
- 4/4/26 – John Penn program, 23 attendees
- 4/9/26 – United We Stand exhibit opening, 200 attendees
- 4/11/26 – Lawrence Dunmore program, 52 attendees
- 4/18/26 – African American History program, 24 attendees
- 4/24/26 – Courtney at SAR meeting, 32 attendees
- 6/29/26 – Courtney at Carolina Arbors, 112 attendees
- 6/30/26 – Courtney at Governor's Club, 140 attendees

In addition to programs and events, we hosted several field trips. Field trips serve to expose younger audiences to all the Museum has to offer. Many students who visit the Museum during a field trip return later with their families to play in Kids' Space or attend programs and events.

- 3/19/26 and 3/20/26 – Expedition School, 60 attendees
- 4/29/26 – Duke School, 75 attendees

The Museum saw 1,408 on-site visitors for the period of January-June

**Please explain how the organization successfully promoted tourism in Hillsborough in this part of the fiscal year:**

Museum programs, exhibits, and other activities were promoted through social media, our website, our digital newsletter, and by submitting information to various local event calendars.

Additionally, we used the same avenues listed above to share promotional material from other Hillsborough organizations to support their efforts to increase tourist traffic. Rack cards for various other sites around Hillsborough are displayed outside the museum when we are open to visitors.

**Contract Partner Tourism Impact**

**Please estimate the number of residents the contract partner served for this part of the year:**  
248

**Please estimate the number of tourists the contract partner brought to Hillsborough this part of the year:** 1,200

**Please describe how the actual number of residents and tourists served was measured (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):**

The Museum tracks on-site guests manually by having the front desk associate tally the number of visitors the museum received as well as asking visitors for their zip code. Additionally, program attendance is tracked through ticket sales, event registrations, and counts by staff at events. N.B. zip codes are only collected for daily museum visitors and not for program/event attendees. Numbers reported above only represent those daily museum visitors.

**Please describe how the contract partner joined with local hotel/motels to increase occupancy rates (if applicable):**

N/A

**Please describe how the organization partnered and informed local businesses of the partner's events/program/exhibits/etc. (if applicable):**

- Featuring earrings from Carlisle and Linney in our gift shop along with business cards to encourage guests to visit the store
- Providing rack cards and other materials to other sites in Hillsborough, as well as featuring promotional material from other sites in the Museum
- Tagging other sites in town in social media posts and sharing their content

**Please [calculate the overall economic impact](#) of any events/programs held (if applicable):**

| TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT |                    |          |                  |                          |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                       | TOTAL EXPENDITURES | FTE JOBS | HOUSEHOLD INCOME | LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE | STATE GOVERNMENT REVENUE |
| ORGANIZATION(S):      | \$74,326           | 2        | \$48,585         | \$2,111                  | \$3,772                  |
| AUDIENCES:            | \$74,114           | 2        | \$32,125         | \$3,064                  | \$4,414                  |
| TOTAL:                | \$148,440          | 4        | \$80,710         | \$5,175                  | \$8,186                  |

The majority of daily visitors to the Museum are from out of town, meaning they are spending the day in Hillsborough. We are asked frequently by these visitors for recommendations for places to eat lunch, grab a drink, or shop. We direct them to the local business downtown. It is safe to assume the majority of visitors to the Museum are patronizing the local shops and restaurants downtown during their visit o Hillsborough, increasing the economic impact.

Additionally, the greatest benefit of the Orange County Historical Museum is not the economic impact. We are the stewards of Orange County history, preserving and conserving hundreds of artifacts and documents spanning the entire history of Orange County and Hillsborough. Without us, the stories of those that came before us would be lost, and the rich culture of Hillsborough would be diminished.



**How many volunteers did the contract partner utilize: 5**

**How many volunteer hours were logged at the contract partner: 381**

## Bi-annual Reflections

**Please explain some 'successes' and/or things that went well and some preliminary ideas on how the organization can expand on those in the following part of the year or in the next fiscal year:**

Our biggest success for this half of the year was the opening of our new special exhibit "United We Stand: Unity and Division in Orange County History." This was our most well attended exhibit opening to date, with approximately 200 individuals in attendance. We have continued to prioritize community engagement with our special exhibits, with 36 individuals from throughout Orange County being featured in this exhibit. This exhibit uses the first motto of the United State, United We Stand, Divided We Fall, as a lens through which to explore Orange County History. It explores the way six key themes, commerce, learning, environment, service, health, and the arts, have united and divided Orange County through the years. The high turnout for the opening and the positive response in the months since shows that this approach to exhibits continues to be something that resonates with visitors, local and tourists alike.

Another major success for this half of the year was our 250<sup>th</sup> lecture series that ran February-April. These talks covered a variety of different topics related to the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and were very well attended. They have shown us that the lecture series format is very popular, and it is something we might try to replicate in the future.

**Please explain any ways that the organization ran into unexpected roadblocks or difficulties and/or some preliminary ideas on how the organization can overcome those in the future (if applicable):**

N/A

## Marketing and Sustainability

Please explain how the organization marketed and promoted themselves as a tourism destination and/or promoted their events/programming/projects for this part of the year (please include copies or photos of any flyers, advertisements run, banners/signs printed and hung, and any press coverage the project may have received):

The Orange County Historical Museum made use of social media and e-newsletters as our primary means of marketing and promoting. The Museum posts daily on Facebook and Instagram with updates about upcoming events, local history facts, exhibit information, and more. We also repost partner organizations posts on our Instagram story when appropriate. We send out monthly newsletters on the first of each month to subscribers detailing everything that is happening in the month ahead, as well as timelier reminders of programs and events.

The Museum also produces rack cards for the Museum in general, special exhibits, and tours which are available at the Museum and are made available to partner organizations around town. Rack cards have also been distributed to historic sites and Museums in the area.

Press releases for events were made available to local news outlets.

### **Please provide any information on any fundraising the organization did and how that supports the long-term, sustainable, financial goals of the organization:**

The main fundraising efforts for the Museum occur in Q2 and Q4. However, throughout the year we include a link to donate in all e-newsletters sent to subscribers. Additionally, we always have a donation jar and QR code to access our online donation platform at the front desk. All events and programs indirectly support our fundraising efforts by attracting new supporters and showing existing supporters the types of programs the Museum is able to produce with their support. We consider every program and event a friend-raiser, away to get people invested in what the Museum is doing so they will hopefully donate in the future.

Q4 saw our annual Friendship Campaign. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year. Mailers are sent to previous donors urging them to once again become a friend of the Museum. The campaign is advertised extensively on social media and through our email newsletter. Additionally, during this period, we ran a dedicated campaign to raise money for the restoration and conservation of an 1880 copy of the Declaration of Independence. This campaign was very successful, showing that donors are heavily motivated to give to a specific cause more than they are a general campaign. Based on this, we plan to hold more campaigns in the future to fund specific projects.

**Budget Adjustments or Updates** (if applicable- do not include if there are no changes and things are right on budget. This is an opportunity to let the board know of any big changes per the contract.)

| a. Item                                                                                                                    | b. Amount Needed via Contract Funding in FY26 (for each item) | c. Amount Contributed by Organization (for each item) | d. Other Funding Sources | e. Total Contract Budget (add columns b-d) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Ex: Revolutionary War Re-enactors                                                                                          | Ex: \$1,000                                                   | Ex: \$2,000                                           |                          |                                            |
| i.e. Personnel Costs- .5 FTE- Part Time Coordinator (10 hours p/w)                                                         | Ex: \$6,500                                                   | Ex: \$1,000                                           | Ex: \$500                | \$8,000                                    |
| 1. Operations- Utilities                                                                                                   | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 2. Operations- Staffing/Administration Site Manager (30 hours per week @ \$15.00 per hour) = \$23,400                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 3. Operations- Insurance/Safety Items                                                                                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 4. Advertising- Social Media/Online                                                                                        | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 5. Advertising- Print Ads, Brochures, Postcards                                                                            | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 6. Data Processing- Website Maintenance, E-newsletters                                                                     | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 7. Exhibits/Displays/Attraction Development                                                                                | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 8. Special Projects/Events Admin                                                                                           | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 9. Bands                                                                                                                   | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 10.                                                                                                                        | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 11.                                                                                                                        | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 12.                                                                                                                        | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 13.                                                                                                                        | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 14.                                                                                                                        | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 15.                                                                                                                        | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| <b>TOTALS</b><br>(sum of each column)                                                                                      | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| ** PLEASE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SHEETS (USING THE SAME FORMAT) IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH ROOM TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR FULL BUDGET ** |                                                               |                                                       |                          |                                            |
|                                                                                                                            |                                                               |                                                       |                          |                                            |

## Signatures

I hereby certify that the information contained in this bi-annual report is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false or misleading information may disqualify this organization from receiving future funding from the Tourism Board.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Signature (digital is fine): N/A

Date:

Printed Name:

### BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Signature (digital is fine):



Date: 7/24/26

Printed Name: Gregg Phillips

### CONTRACT CONTACT PERSON (if different than Executive Director)

Signature:



Date: 7/24/26

Printed Name: Catie Atkinson



# Foundational Documents

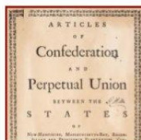
## Talks for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Country



**January 31 – Magna Carta and the British Tradition**  
The colonists claimed that they were fighting to restore their rights as Englishmen. What were these rights and how had they been protected back in the UK? Legal historian Charles Plambeck will trace how birthright freedoms became a part of British constitutional forms.



**February 7 – The Declaration of Independence**  
OCHM Exhibits Coordinator Courtney Smith will discuss the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence along with the theory and context behind it. And, she will translate the document into modern language. The talk includes a presentation on Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.



**February 14 – The Articles of Confederation**  
Once the colonies declared independence, they need a national government. What was the structure of this government? What were its goals and how well did it do in achieving them. OCHM Exhibits Coordinator Courtney Smith will explore these topics.



**February 21 – The Constitution**  
Why was the Constitution written? What are the basic powers provided and forbidden the government? How was the Constitution ratified? Why did North Carolina resist? What was Hillsborough's role in the process? Find the answer to these questions and more in this presentation by OCHM Exhibits Coordinator Courtney Smith.



Presented by  
**the Orange County Historical Museum** at  
Hillsborough Presbyterian Church, 102 W. Tryon Street



The Orange County Historical Museum &  
the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence  
Invite you to attend a dedication ceremony for the installment of a  
plaque in the Old Town Cemetery to honor

**Anne Hooper**

wife of William Hooper, signer of the Declaration of Independence



**March 14**  
**2PM**

At the Hillsborough Presbyterian Church  
102 W Tryon St



Refreshments provided by  
the Chapel Hill-Davie Poplar &  
William Hooper chapters of  
The Daughters of the American Revolution



orangehistorync



orangehistorync UPDATED PROGRAM SCHEDULE -  
Postponing for the weather has allowed us to shuffle our  
upcoming programs back into the correct chronological order.  
We hope you will join us to learn about these important  
documents and the roles they played in shaping our country.  
For more information visit the link in our bio for upcoming  
events.

#history #museum #historymuseum #nchistory  
#historichillsborough #visitthillsboroughnc #hillsboroughnc  
#orangecountync #chapelhill #America250

26w

View insights

Boost post



Liked by historichillsborough and 3 others  
January 23

Add a comment...

Post



orangehistorync



orangehistorync Join the Orange County Historical Museum  
and the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of  
Independence for a dedication ceremony for the installment of  
a plaque in the Old Town Cemetery to honor Anne Hooper.  
Representatives from the national Descendants of the Signers  
of the Declaration of Independence, Sheryl Albert, a local  
descendant of the Hoopers, and local historians will make  
presentations. Refreshments will be provided by local  
chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution. And a  
wreath will be laid at the burial site.

This event is free to attend and no registration is required. For  
more information, please visit the link in our bio for upcoming  
events.

#history #museum #historymuseum #nchistory  
#historichillsborough #visitthillsboroughnc #hillsboroughnc  
#orangecountync #chapelhill #America250

23w

View insights

Boost post



3 likes  
February 11

Add a comment...

Post

# Topics in American History

## Talks for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Country



**March 21 — "The Hart of the Struggle: Southern Women on the Revolution's Frontier"**

Graduate student Susannah Haury delves into the legends of extraordinary Southern women during the American Revolution and explore what these larger-than-life figures can tell us about the real, lived experiences of everyday women in the fight for American independence.

**March 28 — "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About John Adams but Were Afraid to Ask"**

As we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, American History scholar Thierry Murad will discuss John Adams and his contributions to the early history of our country

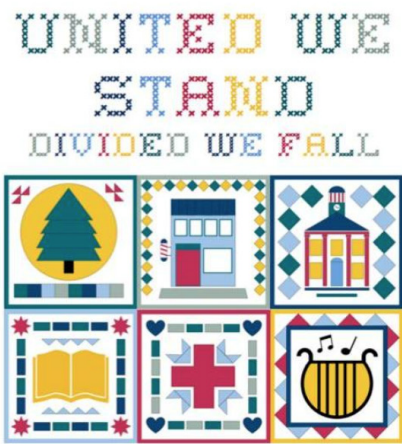


**4:30 PM**

Presented by  
the **Orange County Historical Museum**  
at **Hillsborough Presbyterian Church**  
102 W. Tryon Street



**Please Join Us**



**Unity and Division in Orange County History**

**An Opening Night Reception**

**April 9, 5:00 to 6:30PM**  
**At the Orange County Historical Museum**  
**201 N Churton Street, Hillsborough**

orangehistorync

orangehistorync Join us this Saturday for a look into the lived experience of southern women on the frontier of the American Revolution with graduate student Susannah Haury. The next week, American history scholar Thierry Murad will tell you everything you ever wanted to know about John Adams but were too afraid ask. Both talks will be held at 4:30 PM at the Hillsborough Presbyterian Church. No registration is required and the talks are free to attend. For more information please visit the link in our bio for upcoming events.

#history #museum #historymuseum #nchistory #historichillsborough #visithillsboroughnc #hillsboroughnc #orangecountync #chapelhill #America250

18w

View insights

Boost post

Liked by chapelhillmag and 7 others

March 17

Add a comment...

Post

orangehistorync

orangehistorync EXHIBIT ALERT! Due to unforeseen circumstances, the opening of our new special exhibit "United We Stand" has been delayed one week. The opening reception will now be April 9th at 5 PM. We hope you will still be able to join us to celebrate this exciting new exhibit!

#history #museum #historymuseum #nchistory #historichillsborough #visithillsboroughnc #hillsboroughnc #orangecountync #chapelhill #America250

18w

View insights

Boost post

Liked by hillsborougharts and 12 others

March 16

Add a comment...

Post





orangehistorync

orangehistorync in honor of America 250, our volunteers Vicky and Judy have curated this display of red, white, and blue items from our collection! Make sure to check it out the next time you visit the museum!

#history #museum #historymuseum #chistory #historichillsborough #visithillsboroughnc #hillsboroughnc #orangecountync #chapelhill #America250

13w

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April 20

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## Topics in American History

### Talks for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Country



**April 4 — A Visit from John Penn**

North Carolina Founding Father John Penn will share musings and reflections on the Declaration of Independence and the current state of our nation in the year 1788. Penn, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation, was a lawyer from Granville County. Historian Mark Pace, also from Granville will portray Penn.

**April 11 — Topics in Native American History**

Lawrence Dunmore, III, folklorist and historian for the Ocaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, will present "Vignettes from Eastern Siouan History: Key Events that Shaped the OBSN and Related Communities."




**April 18 — Topics in African American History**

James Shields, manager of the African American Cultural Arts and History Center in Burlington, NC, will explore topics in African American history in the context of the semiquincentennial, including how the field has evolved in the last 250 years, and what work still needs to be done to ensure this history continues to be told as it should be.

Presented by

**4:30 PM** the **Orange County Historical Museum** at **Hillsborough Presbyterian Church**

102 W. Tryon Street



orangehistorync

orangehistorync Tomorrow is Revolutionary War Day in Hillsborough! There are so many exciting activities scheduled around town, including military reenactors, living history demonstrations, walking tours, and more! Make sure to stick around for the next lecture in our 250th series. Lawrence Dunmore, III will present "Vignettes from Eastern Siouan History: Key Events that Shaped the OBSN and Related Communities." The talk will be held at 4:30 PM at Hillsborough Presbyterian Church and is free to attend.

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15w

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April 10

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orangehistorync **Exhibit spotlight!** Each week we will be highlighting one of the incredible Orange County residents featured in our current special exhibit "United We Stand." This week we are highlighting Glenn Dicker, co-founder of Redeye and Yep Roc.

Glenn Dicker's love of music and his desire to chart his own course led him to co-found a business that has had a tremendous, positive impact, both on other musicians and on business people who also want to remain independent. Since the late 1990s, his Redeye distribution company and its in-house label Yep Roc Records have been providing artists and other labels with the production, marketing, and sales tools they need to thrive. Dicker describes the business model as "fiercely independent."

To learn more about Glenn and the other individuals featured in this exhibit, please visit the museum to view the "United We Stand Exhibit" and make sure to pick up a free exhibit catalogue.

#history #museum #historymuseum #nchistory #historichillsborough #visithillsboroughnc #hillsboroughnc #orangecountync #chapelhill #America250

9w

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3 likes

May 19

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We're better  
when we're  
**UNITED**



Become a friend of the  
Orange County Historical Museum

Minimum \$25 donation  
[www.orangehistorync.org/donate](http://www.orangehistorync.org/donate)

orangehistorync

orangehistorync We can't do what we do without our friends. Contributions during our annual friendship campaign help us produce high-quality exhibits and programs year-round. If you would like to support the work we're doing, please consider becoming a friend of the museum by making a minimum \$25 donation at [orangehistorync.org/donate](http://orangehistorync.org/donate). All friends receive recognition on our website.

#history #museum #historymuseum #nchistory #visithillsboroughnc #historichillsborough #hillsboroughnc #orangecountync #chapelhill #America250

11w

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1 like

May 8

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Post

## Lecture Series

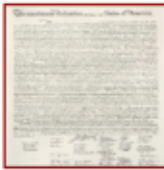
### Foundational Documents

Talks for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Country



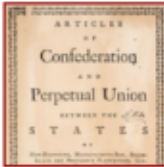
#### January 24 – Magna Carta and the British Tradition

The colonists claimed that they were fighting to restore their rights as Englishmen. What were these rights and how had they been protected back in the UK? Legal historian Charles Plambeck will trace how birthright freedoms became a part of British constitutional forms.



#### January 31 – The Declaration of Independence

OCHM Exhibits Coordinator Courtney Smith will discuss the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence along with the theory and context behind it. And, she will translate the document into modern language. The talk includes a presentation on Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.



#### February 7 – The Articles of Confederation

Once the colonies declared independence, they need a national government. What was the structure of this government? What were its goals and how well did it do in achieving them. OCHM Exhibits Coordinator Courtney Smith will explore these topics.



#### February 14 – The Constitution

Why was the Constitution written? What are the basic powers provided and forbidden the government? How was the Constitution ratified? Why did North Carolina resist? What was Hillsborough's role in the process? Find the answer to these questions and more in this presentation by OCHM Exhibits Coordinator Courtney Smith.

## Celebrating 250 years

### Part I

For the first half of this year, we will offer a series of talks related to the semiquincentennial. We will begin by looking at the foundational documents of our country, starting with the English tradition.

## Learn the meaning and significance of 4 important documents

All talks begin at 4:30 and are being held at the Hillsborough Presbyterian Church (next door to the Museum on Tryon Street).



**Opening April 2**



## Unity and Division in Orange County History

### Opening Night Reception

Join us on **April 2** from 5:00PM to 6:30PM to get  
a first look at our exciting new exhibit

In celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, which officially created the United States of America, this exhibit explores our country's first motto as it has applied to the history of Orange County.

It examines the direct and indirect ways that people in Orange County have been connected and have created communities. It also acknowledges the ways that fear and the pursuit of personal interest created conflict and division.

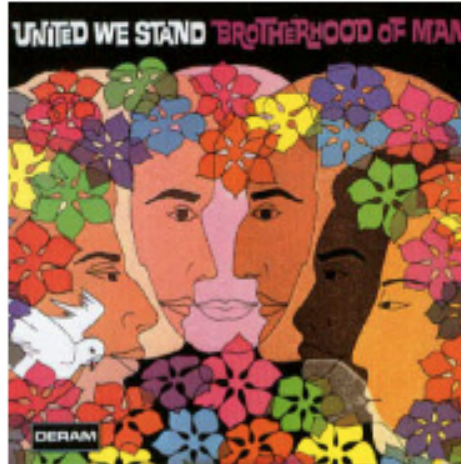
### This exhibit will be arranged thematically

It will explore six areas that people today generally appreciate most about the county and how these threads have united and divided county residents:

Environment \* Commerce \* Service \* Health \* Learning \* The Arts

# Annual Campaign

## Be A Friend



### We're Better When We Are United

Every spring we ask you to show your support for the work we have been doing. Your donations are directly applied to programming:

- Creating exhibits
- Giving tours and hosting field trips
- Presenting speakers and dramas
- Conserving artifacts

All it takes to be a friend of the Museum is a gift of \$25. Of course, you can be our best friend and give more...

Every friend is recognized on our website. Gifts of \$250 or more are listed on the footer.

## Help Us Protect and Present the History of Orange County

SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN

# Hillsborough Tourism Board FY2026 Contract Bi-annual Report & Evaluation



| Organization Information                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                           |                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Organization Name: The Alliance for Historic Hillsborough                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                           |                 |
| Contract Contact Person and Title: Dani McIvor, Executive Director                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                           |                 |
| Contact Person Email:<br>dani@historichillsborough.org                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Contact Person Phone: 919-732-7741                        |                 |
| Organization Street Address: 150 E King St                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                           |                 |
| City: Hillsborough                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | State: NC                                                 | ZIP Code: 27278 |
| Organization's TOTAL Annual Operating Budget: \$ 369,785                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                           |                 |
| Contract General Information                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                           |                 |
| July-December Report or<br>January-June? (Mark one)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | TOTAL Amount of YEARLY Contract Funding: \$<br>272,985.00 |                 |
| Outline/Overview of the organization's tourism events/programs/activities to-date:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                           |                 |
| <p><b>Visit Hillsborough Initiatives:</b></p> <p><b>Visitor Center &amp; Visitor Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Alliance is responsible for full time staffing at the Hillsborough Visitors Center seven days a week (Monday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Sunday, 12–4 p.m.).</li> <li>• Managed ongoing maintenance of the historic Dickson House, public restrooms, grounds, and gardens to provide a welcoming visitor experience.</li> <li>• Updated the Visit Hillsborough website with current event listings, business hours, landing pages, and monthly blog content highlighting seasonal activities and attractions.</li> <li>• Produced monthly event flyers for town kiosks and distributed the Visit Hillsborough e-newsletter to promote local events.</li> <li>• Ensured staff and volunteers were up-to-date with information about local businesses, events, and openings/closures to provide recommendations and answer visitor questions.</li> <li>• Served over 5,400 visitors in FY 25-26</li> </ul> <p><b>Marketing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained an active Visit Hillsborough social media presence on Instagram and Facebook with regular posts two to three times per week.</li> </ul> |                                                           |                 |

- Hired and managed a new summer social media intern.
- Partnered quarterly with Chapelboro/The Hill Radio on digital features and radio spots promoting Hillsborough events, attractions, and local businesses.
- Continued to develop influencer partnerships, including a “day in West Hillsborough” campaign with Raleating that has 106,000 views.
- Collaboration with VisitNC to promote events in town to a statewide audience.
- Campaign with QC Exclusive/Discover Carolinas covering a weekend trip to Hillsborough, which received our highest engagement of the year with 26,000 new accounts reached.
- Ad campaign with WUNC promoting events, Blue Ridge Outdoors promoting outdoor focused trips to Hillsborough, WRAL spotlight article promoting day trips to Hillsborough.
- E-blast campaigns with Triangle Weekender, Blue Ridge Outdoors, Raleigh Magazine.
- Creation of new FY 26-27 marketing plan based on monthly FY 25-26 metrics. Soliciting and contracting with over 20 marketing contracts including print media, influencers, digital media, radio, and social media marketing avenues.
- Worked with Our State magazine journalists writing a feature on Hillsborough’s businesses and the history of the town.

### **Events & Programs Organized:**

Q3/Q4:

Q1/2:

- Haunting Hour: 205 tickets
- Tinsel and Traditions: 300 attendees
- Holiday Fair: 450 attendees
- Walking tours: 106 attendees
- Private tours: 32 attendees
- Field trips: 383 attendees
- Burns Night: 75 participants
- Rev War Day: 680 participants
- Preservation Day (with Preservation NC): 359 participants
- Indigenous Memories Beading Class: 61 participants
- Tours (Historic Hillsborough, Outlandish, and Revolutionary War): 134 attendees
- Field Trips: 166 student participants.

### **Events & Programs Supported:**

- Merchant’s Trick or Treat
- OCHM’s 3PC
- Homes for the Holidays Gingerbread competition
- FlushFest
- Uproar
- Solstice Lantern Walk
- Hillsborough Climate Challenge
- PORCH Scavenger Hunt
- Moorefields Jazz and Bluegrass Festivals
- Last Fridays & The Art Walk
- Becoming Lunsford Lane lecture at the Masonic Lodge
- Creek Week
- Hillsborough Garden Club Plant Sale
- United We Stand OCHM Exhibit Opening
- Fairview Youth in Action intern program & community events (Walk Fairview Day)
- Chamber of Commerce Diaper Bank
- BLACFest at the OC Main Library

**Please explain how the organization successfully promoted tourism in Hillsborough in this part of the fiscal year:**

The organization successfully promoted tourism in Hillsborough during this part of the fiscal year through a combination of coordinated marketing, event promotion, and direct visitor services. Through VisitHillsborough, the organization coordinated marketing campaigns with media partners to increase Hillsborough's visibility as a destination and promote the town's attractions, events, businesses, and experiences to potential visitors. Social media was also used strategically to amplify events taking place throughout the community. These efforts provided visitors with more reasons to plan a trip and helped reinforce Hillsborough as a destination with something to offer throughout the year.

Once visitors arrived, the Hillsborough Visitors Center provided an important connection point between tourism marketing and the visitor experience. By maintaining the Visitors Center as a staffed, seven-day-a-week resource, the organization created a welcoming "first stop" where visitors could ask questions, receive personalized recommendations, pick up maps and visitor information, and learn about local attractions, restaurants, shops, trails, and upcoming events.

**Contract Partner Tourism Impact**

Please estimate the number of residents the contract partner served for this part of the year: 3738 (yearly calculation)

Please estimate the number of tourists the contract partner brought to Hillsborough this part of the year: 2,322 (Yearly total: 5449)

**Please describe how the actual number of residents and tourists served was measured (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):**

At the Dickson House Visitors Center, guests are asked to sign in and provide their place of origin. Volunteers and front desk staff are trained to collect this information when visitors do not independently sign in, helping to ensure that visitor data is captured as consistently as possible. Sign-in information is organized and maintained in an Excel database, allowing the organization to track total visitor numbers and geographic reach for annual reporting and evaluation.

For programs and events, AHH uses Zeffy to collect registration and ticketing information, including visitor location data. Following each event, Zeffy registration and ticket information is reviewed and analyzed to determine attendance and better understand the geographic reach of individual programs. For free, non-ticketed



events, the organization uses click counters to estimate attendance. Whenever possible, guests are also encouraged to register for free events through Zeffy, even when there is no admission fee. This allows the organization to collect more detailed information about attendees while also providing a more accurate picture of event participation.

**Please describe how the contract partner joined with local hotel/motels to increase occupancy rates (if applicable):**

The Alliance worked directly with the Colonial Inn to amplify its existing marketing and promote the property to potential Hillsborough visitors. The organization also partnered with the Colonial Inn to offer a special discount code for Outlandish Hillsborough Scottish Festival attendees, encouraging out-of-town visitors to stay overnight.

I also arranged for travel influencers, including QC/DiscoverCarolinas and KateHikes, to stay at the Colonial Inn in exchange for featuring the property in their Hillsborough travel recommendations. These partnerships provided additional exposure for the hotel while promoting overnight stays to new audiences.

**Please describe how the organization partnered and informed local businesses of the partner's events/program/exhibits/etc. (if applicable):**

We kept local businesses informed about events and programs and encouraged cross-promotion through Visit Hillsborough. Business events were regularly promoted through Visit Hillsborough's social media channels, increasing their visibility to visitors and residents. The organization also partnered directly with businesses to drive tourism traffic following major events, such as working with Yonder to host the Official Outlandish Afterparty. Ongoing social media relationships with local businesses also support mutual promotion, with businesses regularly liking, commenting on, and sharing Alliance and Visit Hillsborough posts about upcoming events and programs.

**Please calculate the overall economic impact of any events/programs held (if applicable):**

| TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT |                    |          |                  |                          |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                       | TOTAL EXPENDITURES | FTE JOBS | HOUSEHOLD INCOME | LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE | STATE GOVERNMENT REVENUE |
| ORGANIZATION(S):      | \$8,000            | 0        | \$5,229          | \$227                    | \$406                    |
| AUDIENCES:            | \$44,009           | 1        | \$19,076         | \$1,819                  | \$2,621                  |
| TOTAL:                | \$52,009           | 1        | \$24,305         | \$2,046                  | \$3,027                  |

How many volunteers did the contract partner utilize: 24

How many volunteer hours were logged at the contract partner: 1052 (\$19,000 value)

#### Bi-annual Reflections

**Please explain some ‘successes’ and/or things that went well and some preliminary ideas on how the organization can expand on those in the following part of the year or in the next fiscal year:**

Several areas have shown strong results during this period. **Outlandish planning** has been particularly successful this year due to having a longer planning runway and an established plan developed from 2024 successes and challenges, allowing staff to establish a clear plan and prepare well in advance for 2026. This approach can be continued in future years to reduce last-minute work and support smoother event execution.

**Field trips and private tours** have also grown significantly, including partnerships with larger groups such as the Sons of the American Revolution. AHH can build on this growth by continuing targeted outreach to schools, organizations, and group tour operators and developing additional opportunities for large-group visits, including in collaboration with other partners including the OCHM and the Burwell School.

**Social media and digital marketing** have grown through consistent Reel posting, influencer collaborations, and experimenting with new forms of marketing while continuing to invest in reliable avenues like radio and print media. Combining traditional media with influencer-style social media has helped VisitHillsborough reach a range of viewers in differing locations and age groups. VH can continue building on this success through a consistent short-form video strategy, additional influencer partnerships, and continued integration of digital and traditional marketing.

**Please explain any ways that the organization ran into unexpected roadblocks**

**or difficulties and/or some preliminary ideas on how the organization can overcome those in the future (if applicable):**

The decision was made to cancel the Hills Academy continuing education program in order to focus resources on initiatives that have already demonstrated stronger results, including expanding private tours for adult groups. Private tours require less upfront investment than a new, untested program and provide a more reliable source of revenue for the Alliance, making them a more sustainable area for future growth. In the future, we aim to build on and expand proven initiatives (events, guided tours, field trips).

We also faced an unexpected weather-related challenge when January inclement weather required the rescheduling of nearly 70 Burns Night event tickets. Staff, particularly Programs Coordinator Kelly Arnold, responded quickly by developing a system that allowed ticket holders to either transfer their tickets to the rescheduled event or receive a refund. This allowed us to successfully adapt and overhaul a two-night event on short notice. Going forward, maintaining a similar contingency plan will help us respond more efficiently to similar disruptions with as little inconvenience and confusion as possible for ticket holders.

- The collaboration of the Event Shuttle pilot program was executed successfully, but certain aspects left room for improvement. Ridership was estimated to be 150-200 riders, which was lower than anticipated. While HAC advertised the shuttle on their brochures and website, a wider information campaign by Visit Hillsborough about the shuttle and its purpose could help boost ridership during the next event.

**Marketing and Sustainability**

**Please explain how the organization marketed and promoted themselves as a tourism destination and/or promoted their events/programming/projects for this part of the year (please include copies or photos of any flyers, advertisements run, banners/signs printed and hung, and any press coverage the project may have received):**

See VHB marketing plan.

**Please provide any information on any fundraising the organization did and how that supports the long-term, sustainable, financial goals of the organization:**

The AHH continued to successfully fundraise for Telling the Full Story Phase Two. We received a \$10,000 grant from Duke Energy that will go toward production costs for the project. We also significantly grew our organizational donations by opting-in to a fundraising link through our Zeffy platform – those purchasing a ticket to our events have the option of adding on a donation, which 10-15% of ticketholders decide to do. Donors can also donate directly through Zeffy without having to purchase a ticket.

**Budget Adjustments or Updates** (if applicable- do not include if there are no changes and things are right on budget. This is an opportunity to let the board know of any big changes per the contract.)

| a. Item                                                                                                 | b. Amount Needed via Contract Funding in FY26 (for each item) | c. Amount Contributed by Organization (for each item) | d. Other Funding Sources | e. Total Contract Budget (add columns b-d) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Ex: Revolutionary War Re-enactors                                                                       | Ex: \$1,000                                                   | Ex: \$2,000                                           |                          |                                            |
| i.e. Personnel Costs-.5 FTE- Part Time Coordinator (10 hours p/w)                                       | Ex: \$6,500                                                   | Ex: \$1,000                                           | Ex: \$500                | \$8,000                                    |
| 1. Operations-Utilities                                                                                 | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |
| 2. Operations-Staffing/Administration<br>Site Manager (30 hours per week @ \$15.00 per hour) = \$23,400 | \$                                                            | \$                                                    | \$                       |                                            |

|                                                        |    |    |    |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|--|
| 3. Operations- Insurance/Safety Items                  | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 4. Advertising- Social Media/Online                    | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 5. Advertising- Print Ads, Brochures, Postcards        | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 6. Data Processing- Website Maintenance, E-newsletters | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 7. Exhibits/Displays/Attraction Development            | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 8. Special Projects/Events Admin                       | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 9. Bands                                               | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 10.                                                    | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 11.                                                    | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 12.                                                    | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 13.                                                    | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 14.                                                    | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| 15.                                                    | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |
| <b>TOTALS</b><br>(sum of each column)                  | \$ | \$ | \$ |  |

**\*\* PLEASE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SHEETS (USING THE SAME FORMAT) IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH ROOM TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR FULL BUDGET \*\***

## Signatures

I hereby certify that the information contained in this bi-annual report is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that providing false or misleading information may disqualify this organization from receiving future funding from the Tourism Board.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Signature (digital is fine):

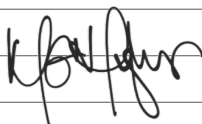
*Dani McIvor*

Date: 8/12/2026

Printed Name: Dani McIvor

### BOARD CHAIRPERSON

Signature (digital is fine):



Date: 8/19/2026



|                                                                |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Printed Name:                                                  |       |
|                                                                |       |
| CONTRACT CONTACT PERSON (if different than Executive Director) |       |
| Signature:                                                     | Date: |
| Printed Name:                                                  |       |



**STAFF REPORT**  
Hillsborough Tourism Board  
August 31, 2026

**PRESENTER/INFORMATION CONTACT**

Tourism Program Manager, Shannan Campbell

**ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED**

**Subject:** Tourism Board Funding Structure Update Discussion(s)

**Attachments:**

1. N/A

**Background:**

Tourism Contracting (>\$10,000 usually more like \$15K-300K; issued annually with a contract outlining basic expectations)

The Tourism Board has contracted with local organizations since FY17 to provide visitor services, operations of historic sites, and to put on annual events. Going to contracted services was in lieu of having every partner competing for grants every year and not being sure if they would have funding the next year or not. Also created a more structured grant process. Contract partners are asked annually if they want to contract again for the next year and are asked to prepare a detailed proposal and budget on how much tourism funding they are asking for the following year and how they intend to spend the funds. Contract partners are responsible for checking in quarterly with the Tourism Board to give highlights as well as complete a mid year and final year report)

Tourism Grants (\$3,000-\$10,000; issued just for that fiscal year the grant is applied for with a contract outlining basic expectations)

The Tourism Board issues grant funding (usually about \$20-25K per year, not fixed) based on a competitive grant process. Grants open, are scored, and issued in the Spring for the following fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Grants require a final report at the end that is shared with the Tourism Board. Grant projects are awarded for up to two years and are expected to become sustainable and/or move to a contract if expected to be annual and is not able to become sustainable.

Tourism Special Projects/Partnerships/Sponsorships (>\$4,999)

The Tourism Board can issue special project/partnership/sponsorship funding as opportunities arise for smaller projects throughout the year. Generally these requests are not taken during budget and grant season (March-June).

**Summary, key points, and questions:**

During the FY27 budget process both contract partners and Tourism Board members raised some concerns with how budgeting is done and funding is allocated. The Tourism Board members should review how their funding is currently being allocated to non-profit partners for tourism events, programs, and projects to re-familiarize themselves with the process and then provide feedback with what they think is working/not working/could be improved and any ideas they may have.

Some ideas to date:

- Move contract partners to fixed amount, multi-year contracts (2 year, 3 year, 5 year?) as funding is available (can legally only contract for one year)
- Reduce the amount of reporting contract partners are required to do (eg. Only have a mid year and end of year report or presentation to tourism board, eliminate the formal report in favor of just doing the informal presentations, etc.)
- Reduce the level of detail in the contract partners budgets (some contract partners break down how many pens they plan to buy for example, while others are more general and indicate 'office supplies'. This has not been policed or advised for or against.)
- Simplify or combine funding opportunities

**Staff recommendation and comments:**

None. Staff encourages an open dialogue from Tourism Board members on their experiences, expectations, concerns, questions, etc. to improve the process.

Staff will take that feedback, explore what other tourism organizations across the state are doing, and make some recommendations at a future meeting for the tourism board to consider.

[illegible]