



NORTH CAROLINA COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES June 05, 2026

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Harris Alumni Center, Tate Hall
8688 Johnson Alumni Way
Charlotte, North Carolina 28223

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Gregory Bryant, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST: The Chair welcomed everyone and acknowledged guests, Commission Members, Tribal Leaders, Chiefs, State Officials, University of North Carolina at Charlotte officials, and Commission staff.

INVOCATION: Commissioner Vee Oxendine recognized the Fallen Warriors who passed away this quarter and delivered the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner WD Baucom led the membership and guests in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Chairman Bryant requested that Ms. Daphne Pinto, staff member, perform the roll call. Chairman Bryant noted that when Commission members' names are called, each member will be asked to state their name and affirmation. In addition, he indicated that members need to state if they "approve" of the agenda.

TRIBAL AND ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Coharie	Ed Simermeyer	Present Approve
Coharie	Lenora Locklear	Absent
Cumberland County Association for Indian People	Harrison Jones	Absent
Cumberland County Association for Indian People	Tina Dicke	Present via TEAMS Approve
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Michael Lambert	Present Approve
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Jarrett Crowe	Present via TEAMS Approve
Guilford Native American Association	Perry L Hunt Jr.	Present Approve
Guilford Native American Association	Amanda J Ballard	Present (Arrived late)
Haliwa Saponi	Alfred Richardson	Present Approve
Haliwa Saponi	P. Sunshine Richardson	Absent
Lumbee	Larece Hunt	Absent
Lumbee	Ricky Burnett	Present Approve
Lumbee	Vernanda Oxendine	Present Approve



ROLL CALL *(Continued)*

Meherrin	Edward Livingston	Present Approve
Metrolina Native American Association	Walter D. Baucom	Present Approve
Metrolina Native American Association	Greg Bryant	Present Approve
Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation	Tony Hayes	Present Approve
Sappony	Dorothy Yates	Present (Arrived late)
Triangle Native American Society	Danny Bell	Present Approve
Waccamaw Siouan	Reah. Jacobs	Present Approve
Waccamaw Siouan	Nadine F. Patrick	Present Approve

STATE OFFICIALS

President Pro Tem Appointee	Gerald Goolsby	Present Approve
Speaker of the House Appointee	Craig D. McMillian	Absent
Department of Administration (DOA), Gabriel J. Esparza, Secretary		Present
Designee: Noelle S. Talley, Deputy Secretary		Present Approve
Department of Commerce/ ESC, Lee Lilley, Secretary		
Designee: Emily Roach, Director of Policy and Strategic Planning		
Designee: Veronica Ronne Grantham, Regional Operations Director		Present Approve
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), D. Reid Wilson, Secretary		
Designee: John A Nicholson, Chief Deputy Secretary, DEQ		Present Approve
Department of Health & Human Services, DevDutta Sangvai, Secretary		
Designee: Debra Farrington, Deputy Secretary Health Equity		Present Approve
Department of Labor, Luke Farley, Commissioner		
Designee: Chris Bullard, Senior Advisor		Present via TEAMS
Department of Cultural Resources, Chris Southerly, Advisor,		Present
Ad hoc- Non-Voting Member		

OTHER STATE OFFICIALS

Mark Teague, Attorney, NC Department of Justice	Present
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YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

NCNAYO Kenly McLaurin (Co-Chair) - Non-Voting Member	Absent
Vacant (Co-Chair) – Non-Voting Member	Absent
NC NACOE Thorn Grove - Non-Voting Member	Present via TEAMS

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM: The Chair declared that a quorum was present; therefore, the meeting proceeded according to the agenda.

STAFF PRESENT

Gregory Richardson, Executive Director
Daphne Pinto, Administrative Secretary to the Executive Director
Stephen (Steve) Maynor, Program Director, Section 8 Housing Program
Elkton (Elk) Richardson, Program Director, State Recognition Program
Pamela (Shena) Brewington, Program Director, Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)
Tenley (Nikki) Locklear, Program Director, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program



Laury Chavis, Program Director, Tobacco Survey Program

OTHERS PRESENT: Catawba Nation delegation, Assistant Chief, Ms. Patricia Leach, and other tribal representatives were in attendance. A list of attendees is on file with the Commission.

ADOPTION OF THE MEETING AGENDA: The agenda was adopted during the roll call.

ETHICS STATEMENT: Commissioner Gerald Goolsby read the Ethics Statement on Behalf of Chairman Bryant and urged Commission Members to declare any conflicts of interest, or any appearances of conflicts of interest that may exist in relation to any matters before the Commission, as mandated by the State Ethics Act. No conflicts were noted.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 04, 2026, MEETING MINUTES: The minutes of March 04, 2026, were presented for adoption.

MOTION: Commissioner Gerald Goolsby moved to approve the minutes of March 04, 2026. Commissioner Tony Hayes seconded the motion. The Chair asked whether there were any objections to the motion. None were noted. **The motion was approved.**

APPROVAL OF APRIL 14, 2026, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES: April 14, 2026, special meeting minutes were presented for adoption. The purpose of that meeting was to vote on the State Recognition of the Catawba Nation.

MOTION: Commissioner Alfred Richardson moved to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2026, Special Meeting of the Commission. Commissioner Gerald Goolsby seconded the motion. The Chair asked whether there were any objections to the motion. None were noted. **The motion was approved.**

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO MR. ELTON RAY JACOBS

Commissioner WD Baucom, on behalf of the Commission, recognized the life and service of former Commissioner Elton Ray Jacobs of the Waccamaw Siouan Tribe, who passed away unexpectedly.

Key Highlights:

- He gave more than two decades of service to the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs.
- He was a lifelong advocate for the Waccamaw Siouan Tribe and Native communities throughout North Carolina.
- He was a founding member of the Buckhead Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department and served in that capacity until his death.
- Recognition of his leadership, dedication, and community impact.

Chair Greg Bryant and Mr. Greg Richardson provided brief remarks. They both individually honored the memory of the late Mr. Jacobs.

Commissioner WD Baucom expressed condolences to the family of Mrs. Elane Lambert, wife of former Commissioner Furnie Lambert, who passed away unexpectedly.



The Chairman acknowledged Ms. Reah Jacobs, who has been elected to the Commission by the Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe and will complete the term of office for Mr. Elton Ray Jacobs. The Commission welcomed Ms. Reah Jacobs to the Commission!

WELCOME AND GREETINGS

Metrolina Native American Association: Mr. Jerry Sanderson, Chairman of the Metrolina Native American Association, welcomed Commissioners, tribal leaders, and guests to Charlotte.

Key Highlights:

- Recognition of the Native American population in the Charlotte area.
- Acknowledgement of the Commission's role in advancing Native issues since 1971 in the Charlotte area.
- Emphasis on education, economic development, health, housing, workforce development, and cultural preservation.
- Recognition of the importance of collaboration among tribes, state agencies, and Native organizations.

University of North Carolina in Charlotte, NC

Mr. Richard (Rich) Amon, Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, welcomed the Commission to UNC Charlotte. Mr. Amon gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Key Highlights:

- History and growth of UNC Charlotte
- Research university status and Carnegie RI designation
- Created a new bachelor's and master's program
- New learning and development programs for cybersecurity, defense, innovation, energy, construction, and motorsports
- Educational opportunities available to Native students
- Student success initiatives and affordability
- In conclusion, Mr. Amon thanked Commission Members and guests for attending the meeting at UNC Charlotte.

Supporting Documentation

A handout on the UNC Charlotte PowerPoint presentation is on file with the Commission.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Questions were asked about the following:

- Native American study opportunities
- Increased Native American representation among faculty and staff
- Discussed potential partnerships with the Commission and tribes
- Chairman Bryant thanked Vice Chancellor Amon for hosting the June 2026 Commission Meeting at UNC Charlotte, NC.

North Carolina Department of Administration (NC DOA)

Mr. Gabriel Esparza, Secretary, NC Department of Administration, provided the following updates:

**Key Highlights:**

- Acknowledged the late Mr. Elton Ray Jacobs for his dedicated service of more than two decades with the NC Commission of Indian Affairs. Secretary Esparza expressed condolences to the family of Mr. Jacobs.
- Welcomed Mr. Jacobs' daughter Ms. Reah Jacobs, as Elton Ray's successor on the Commission.
- A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of Elton Ray Jacobs.
- Participation in Coharie cultural events and the Coharie River tour.
- Federal Recognition of the Lumbee Tribe, and what it will mean not only to the Lumbee Tribe but to the Southeastern Region of North Carolina.
- The Commission's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program initiatives.
- Discussed the Catawba Nation petition for state recognition. He thanked the State Recognition Committee Members for their efforts to bring the recommendation of their tribe to the full Commission.
- Provided a snapshot of legislative and budget matters.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- Commission members expressed concerns regarding prolonged vacancies within the Commission staff structure.
- Secretary Esparza responded that delays have been associated with statewide implementation of the new software "Workday" Human Resources hiring platform. Progress has been made in recruitment efforts.
- Secretary Esparza urged members to continue advocating for increased state funding and staffing support for NC Commission of Indian Affairs operations.

CATAWBA NATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA PETITION

Catawba Nation Petition for State Recognition: Mr. Perry Hunt, Committee Chair, State Recognition, presented the following report regarding the Catawba Nation petition for North Carolina state recognition.

Key Highlights on the Background:

- Notice of Intent originally submitted in 2012
- Updated Notice of Intent submitted in 2023
- Petition materials submitted in December 2025
- Recognition Committee review completed January-February 2026
- Public hearing conducted March 18, 2026
- Committee unanimously found that the Catawba Nation satisfied all eight recognition criteria required by North Carolina Administrative Code.

ACTION ITEM:

MOTION: Committee Chair Hunt recommended that the Commission grant state recognition to the Catawba Nation as an American Indian Tribe of North Carolina. Commissioner Alfred Richardson seconded the motion.

Chairman Bryant noted that coming from the Committee does not need a second.



ROLL CALL: Chairman Bryant requested that Ms. Daphne Pinto, staff member, call the roll.

TRIBAL AND ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Coharie	Ed Simermeyer	Yes
Coharie	Lenora Locklear	Absent
Cumberland County Association for Indian People	Harrison Jones	Absent
Cumberland County Association for Indian People	Tina Dicke	Yes via TEAMS
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Michael Lambert	Yes
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Jarrett Crowe	Yes via TEAMS
Guilford Native American Association	Perry L Hunt Jr.	Yes
Guilford Native American Association	Amanda J Ballard	Yes
Haliwa Saponi	Alfred Richardson	Yes
Haliwa Saponi	P. Sunshine Richardson	Absent
Lumbee	Larece Hunt	Absent
Lumbee	Ricky Burnett	Yes
Lumbee	Vernanda Oxendine	Yes
Meherrin	Edward Livingston	Yes
Metrolina Native American Association	Walter D. Baucom	Yes
Metrolina Native American Association	Greg Bryant	Yes
Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation	Tony Hayes	Yes
Sappony	Dorothy Yates	Yes
Triangle Native American Society	Danny Bell	Yes
Waccamaw Siouan	Reah. Jacobs	Yes
Waccamaw Siouan	Nadine F. Patrick	Yes

STATE OFFICIALS

President Pro Tem Appointee	Gerald Goolsby	Yes
Speaker of the House Appointee	Craig D. McMillian	Absent
Department of Administration (DOA), Gabriel J. Esparza, Secretary		Yes
Designee: Noelle S. Talley, Deputy Secretary		
Department of Commerce/ ESC, Lee Lilley, Secretary		
Designee: Emily Roach, Director of Policy and Strategic Planning		
Designee: Veronica Ronne Grantham, Regional Operations Director		Yes
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), D. Reid Wilson, Secretary		
Designee: John A Nicholson, Chief Deputy Secretary, DEQ		Yes
Department of Health & Human Services, DevDutta Sangvai, Secretary		
Designee: Debra Farrington, Deputy Secretary Health Equity		Yes
Department of Labor, Luke Farley, Commissioner		
Designee: Chris Bullard, Senior Advisor		Yes via TEAMS
Department of Cultural Resources, Chris Southerly, Advisor		
Ad hoc- Non-Voting Member		

OTHER STATE OFFICIALS

Mark Teague, Attorney, NC Department of Justice



ROLL CALL *(Continued)*

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

NCNAYO	Kenly McLaurin (Co-Chair) - Non-Voting Member	Absent
	Vacant (Co-Chair) – Non-Voting Member	Absent
NC NACOHE	Thorn Grove -Non-Voting Member	

MOTION

Chairman Bryant announced that the Ayes were the majority in favor of the motion to grant state recognition to the Catawba Nation. The motion was carried.

The Chairman and the Commission members welcomed the Catawba Nation to the Commission as the newest state-recognized tribe in North Carolina. It was noted that the Catawba Nation pursues legislative action now for inclusion in all North Carolina statutes, specifically in all areas where state-recognized tribes are to be represented.

REMARKS, CATAWBA NATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Assistant Chief, Ms. Patricia Leach, Catawba Nation, thanked the Commission for its action and acknowledged the long-standing historical and cultural relationship between the Catawba Nation and North Carolina. She accepted state recognition on behalf of the Catawba Nation.

BRIEF PAUSE FOR A GROUP PHOTO SESSION

GUEST PRESENTATIONS

Catawba Nation Foundation: Ms. Tolani Franks, Program Officer for Indigenous Communities at the Catawba Nation Foundation, provided an overview of the Foundation's mission and grantmaking activities.

Key Highlights:

- Reported 2025 grant distribution: \$160,000 awarded to 20 Native organizations.
- Announced 2026 funding commitment: \$1,000,000 available for tribal communities and Native-serving organizations.
- Reviewed funding priorities: Educational Advancement, Cultural Preservation, Environmental Conservation, and Economic Development.
- Shared key dates: Grant cycle opens September 1, 2026; application deadline September 30, 2026.
- Noted availability of one-on-one budget guidance during the grant cycle.
- Public information sessions scheduled for August 12, 2026, and August 19, 2026.
- Encouraged tribal governments and Native-serving organizations to prepare applications for the September cycle.
- Commission members asked to share funding opportunities within their communities.
- Eligible organizations encouraged to attend informational and technical assistance sessions.

Supporting Documentation

A handout of the Catawba Nation Foundation flyer is on file with the Commission.



American Indian Health Updates (Presented by Ryan Dial, Program Manager, UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and UNC American Indian Center) shared updates on Native health initiatives in North Carolina.

Key Highlights:

- Healthy Native North Carolinians Network: \$94,000 awarded in 2026 to support tribal and urban Indian health projects.
- Tribal Health Assessment Project: Identifying Native health priorities, resource gaps, and infrastructure needs through surveys and listening sessions.
- Data Collection Pilot Project: New effort to gather qualitative and quantitative health data, funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC.
- Survey: Commission members and tribal leaders were encouraged to participate in and share the statewide survey.
- Listening Sessions: UNC will continue its listening sessions and stakeholder engagement throughout 2026.
- Conclusion: Final health assessment results will be shared with tribes and stakeholders; members encouraged to advocate for improved healthcare access and stronger health data collection.

No handout submitted.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS:

- Members emphasized the importance of accurate data, rural healthcare access, food availability, and preventive health.
- Mr. Dial confirmed data collection will include provider access, travel distances, and insurance-related barriers.

LUNCH BREAK

Chair Bryant announced the lunch break at 11:46 am. Commission Member Tony Hayes blessed the food. The meeting was called back to order at 12:50 pm.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Greg Richardson, Executive Director of the NC Commission of Indian Affairs, presented the Executive Director's Report. The report was included in the Board packet sent to the Commission before the meeting.

Mr. Richardson provided the Division update as follows:

Key Highlights

- Recognized the historic seating of the Catawba Nation and the federal recognition of the Lumbee Tribe.
- Reviewed ongoing Commission initiatives and activities.
- Noted Commission Member terms expiring June 30, 2026.
- Provided staffing updates: three current vacancies; Deputy Director position under review; Economic Development position entering interviews; Grants position recently vacated; new Coharie Tribe internship focused on historic preservation.



- Reported on Lumbee Homecoming participation, including an information booth and parade vehicles.
- Announced the 2027 NC Indian Unity Conference in Raleigh, a four-day event requiring the March 2027 Commission meeting to be held on Wednesday.
- Confirmed all grants remain intact; Workforce Development grant refunded at current level; Section 8 Housing Program is stable, and the overall Commission funding is stable.
- Encouraged members to read the full report and use it when reporting to tribal councils and community meetings.

Chair Bryant commended Mr. Richardson for the Division's accomplishments despite staffing shortages.

Supporting Documentation

The Executive Director's Report is filed and constitutes an official part of the meeting minutes.

COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS (Action Items Only)

American Indian Culture & Religion Committee:

The handout of the American Indian Culture and Religion Committee meeting minutes, dated May 18, 2026, was included in the Board packet for members to review. Committee Chair Bell announced the two new members of the Committee, Mr. Quinn Godwin, Director of the American Indian Heritage Commission, and Mr. Harlan Chavis, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Lumbee Tribe.

Committee Chair Bell provided updates on expanding tribal historic preservation efforts and the need for designated Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs). He emphasized collaboration with institutions such as the Office of State Archaeology, UNC-Chapel Hill, East Carolina University, and Appalachian State University.

Committee Chair, Danny Bell, presented the following recommendations with the changes:

ACTION #1:

Recommend that each tribe, urban Indian organization, and tribal entity designate a THPO or point person; create THPO role descriptions; and establish an MOU with the Lumbee Tribe for NAGPRA coordination.

ACTION #2:

Recommend that the Commission, in partnership with the Office of State Archaeology and tribal preservation representatives, begin discussion and planning for an archaeological symposium.

Both motions were presented for Commission consideration. Commissioner Gerald Goolsby, Parliamentarian, recommended that the action items presented need to be voted on separately.

ACTION #1

MOTION:

- Commissioner WD Baucom recommended to amend the wording to include "Urban Organization".



- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby, Parliamentarian, made a friendly amendment to include “Urban Organization”.
- Committee Chair Bell confirmed the wording will be included.
- Commissioner Tony Hayes seconded the motion with the changes.
- Chair Bryant noted that the recommendation from the Committee does not need a second. The chair asked whether a discussion was needed.
- Chair Bryant asked members to say “Aye” if they were in favor of the motion. The Ayes were the majority. **The motion was carried.**

Discussion: Cultural Representation, AI, and Cultural Appropriation

Members expressed concern about misrepresentation of Native cultures through AI and public platforms. Topics included unauthorized use of imagery, cultural symbols, and non-Native individuals representing tribal identities. The Commission agreed that further discussion and action may be necessary.

ACTION #2

MOTION:

- Mr. Chris Bullard, Department of Labor, requested Committee Chair Bell to restate the second action item.
- Committee Chair Bell restated, “It is recommended that the Commission, in partnership with the Office of State Archaeology and the TPO representatives, begin discussions and plan for an archaeological symposium. Perhaps a larger symposium that can cover more material that would be helpful to all in understanding archaeology going forward.”.
- Chair Bryant asked whether a discussion was needed.
- Commission Members asked for clarification on the year. Committee Chair Bell noted next calendar year.
- Commissioner Tony Hayes seconded the motion.
- Chair Bryant asked members to say “Aye” if they were in favor of the motion. The Ayes were the majority. **The motion was carried.**

Supporting Documentation

The handout of the American Indian Culture and Religion Committee Meeting Minutes dated May 18, 2026, is on file at the Commission.

Discussion: Historic Artifacts

- Mr. Greg Richardson reported ongoing theft of historic artifacts from sites and American Indian grave locations, resulting in loss of important archaeological information.
- State Archaeologist Chris Southerly is coordinating with Mr. Bell and Mr. Richardson to address unauthorized artifact removal on state and private lands, emphasizing compliance with statutes and landowner permissions.
- Mr. Southerly noted the issue is widespread and requires additional policy discussion and recommendations.
- Chair Bryant requested Committee Chair Bell to collaborate with the Office of the State Archaeologist.



- Commissioner Goolsby recommended referring the topic to the Legislative Committee, in coordination with the American Indian Culture and Religion Committee Chair, to explore potential legal protections for historic artifacts.

American Indian Housing Committee:

NC Indian Housing Appointment

Recommendations: Vacancy for Lumbee Tribe and Waccamaw Siouan Tribe.

ACTION

Commissioner Ricky Burnett presented the following motion on behalf of Committee Chair Harrison Jones. The Action Item was included in the Board packet for members to review.

- A vote for members whose terms end 06/30/2026
Whitney Bell, Lumbee Tribe: only one name was submitted; however, two are required. Whitney Bell will continue to serve until a second name is received from the Lumbee Tribe.
- A vote for deceased member, Mr. Elton Ray Jacobs, Waccamaw Siouan Tribe
Reah Jacobs, 1st priority
Leslie Jones, 2nd priority

MOTION:

- Commissioner Tony Hayes seconded the motion.
- Chair Bryant noted that the recommendation from the Committee does not need a second. The chair asked whether a discussion was needed.
- Chair Bryant asked members to say “Aye” if they were in favor of the motion. The Ayes were the majority. **The motion was carried.**

INFORMATION ITEM

Commissioner Ricky Burnett presented a letter of support dated June 3, 2026, from Cumberland County Association as an information item regarding Agricultural Innovation, Precision Agriculture, and Grant Resource Development. It was noted that this is **not** an action item. The letter of support was distributed for review.

Supporting Documentation

The handout regarding the Action Item from the NC Indian Housing Committee and the letter of support from Cumberland County Association dated June 3, 2026, are on file with the Commission.

Ad hoc Indian Health Sub-Committee Presenter:

Ms. Kay Freeman provided updates from the Ad Hoc Indian Health Sub-Committee.

Key Highlights:

- Expressed appreciation to Chairman Bryant, Executive Director Greg Richardson, and tribal/urban Native organizations for supporting the Rural Health Transformation Program application.
- Announced Trillium Health Resources’ selection to lead **Regions 2 and 4** in the NC Rural Health Transformation Program; noted this does **not** change Trillium’s existing 46-county catchment area.



- Reported limited responses to the January 2026 request for Native American provider information; approximately **60 providers** identified, primarily Lumbee.
- Additional provider submissions from all catchment areas are still welcome.

No handout submitted.

Rural Health Transformation Program Overview: Ms. Debra Farrington, Deputy Secretary, NC Department of Health and Human Services, provided an overview of the Rural Health Transformation Program, supported by a \$213 million federal grant for 2026–2030. Regional leadership assignments:

- Region 1 – Impact Health
- Region 2 – Trillium
- Region 3 – Via Health
- Region 4 – UNC
- Region 5 – Trillium
- Region 6 – Access East
- Program focus areas include rural health access, workforce development, and chronic disease initiatives.
- Additional program details are available on the NCDHHS website under Rural Health Transformation.
- Ms. Farrington offered to provide future briefings.

No handout submitted.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS:

- Members asked clarifying questions
- Ms. Farrington noted that the Rural Health Transformation program is federally funded for five years (2026-2030).
- Organizational Context: It was noted that separate from the federal program, LME/MCOs (Trillium, Alliance, Via, Partners) continue managing behavioral health and substance use services. A recent merger between Via Health and Partners was noted, contributing to shifting service boundaries.

American Indian Education Committee:

Committee Chair Michael Lambert provided an overview of the April 23, 2026, American Indian Education Committee meeting. One formal action resulted from this meeting.

Key Highlights:

- Scholarship Fund: Twenty-eight scholarships were issued using American Indian license plate revenue.
- SACIE: Committee recommended improving reporting on American Indian students; noted upcoming tribal consultation efforts.
- ICWA/Foster Care: March 2026 Indian Child Welfare Gathering was successful; ongoing concerns about nearly 700 American Indian children in or entering foster care; members encouraged to raise awareness within tribal communities.



- Request for Support Letter to Representatives: Committee Chair Lambert recommended Commission approval of a letter of support for amending the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Chair Bryant asked if discussion was needed. **No action taken.** Members requested a copy, and Chair Lambert will email the letter.

No handout submitted.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS:

- Members asked about efforts to address misrepresentations or omissions of Native American history in state textbooks.
- Textbook updates follow a fixed renewal cycle; review begins about five years before renewal.
- American Indian education stakeholders need earlier involvement; more volunteers needed at the start of each review cycle.
- DPI publishes renewal and review schedules for all subject areas.
- Superintendent Mo Green announced a new Parent Advisory Council with American Indian parent representation; applications available on the Superintendent's website.
- Committee members encouraged American Indian educator-parents to participate.
- Education Committee Chair will follow up on the textbook review process and report back; will also identify steps tribes can take to support improved Native representation in educational materials.

Economic Development, Employment Committee

Environmental Justice

Agricultural Support

NC Growth Economic Impact Study

Presenters

- Commissioner Tony Hayes (for Committee Chair McMillian)
- Christina Strickland Theodoro, Senior Program Manager, NC Growth

Presented updates on economic development, agricultural support, and environmental justice.

Key Highlights

- Commissioner Hayes reviewed agricultural support efforts, environmental justice concerns, and economic development initiatives.
- NC Growth introduced a statewide partnership to strengthen tribal economic development.
- Agricultural Support: Final Cumberland County Indian community support letter shared. **No action needed.**
- Environmental Justice: Committee requested a formal meeting with NCDEQ to address environmental concerns affecting tribal communities.
- NC Growth Partnership: NC Growth outlined its long-term work with tribes and plans to assess tribal economic impact through surveys, research, and graduate-level analysis.
- Economic Impact Study: Research will examine industry trends, development priorities, business operations, and broader economic activity; surveys will be distributed to Commission members and tribal leaders.



- Economic Opportunities: Discussion highlighted challenges in resource-limited communities and noted tribal contributions beyond tourism (e.g., small businesses and regional employment).
- Prior Engagement: NC Growth has completed about 14 projects with 8 tribes over 12 years, with positive feedback.
- Next Steps: Schedule NCDEQ meeting, finalize partnership scope, launch surveys, begin economic ecosystem analysis, prepare for NC Growth's September symposium.
- Key Takeaway: Focus on advancing tribal economic development, addressing environmental justice issues, and supporting resource-limited communities through the NC Growth partnership.

Supporting Documentation

Cumberland County Association support letter (June 3, 2026) is on file with the Commission. No handout for the NC Growth presentation.

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Presentation NCDEQ and PFAS Impacts in the Vicinity of NC Tribal Communities

Presenters:

- **Mr. John Nicholson, Chief Deputy Secretary, NCDEQ**
- **Ms. Sushma Masemore, Deputy Secretary for Environment, NCDEQ**

The following was discussed:

Presentation Overview

- Introductory overview of PFAS and impacts on North Carolina communities, including Tribal areas.
- Covered water quality, contamination concerns, response efforts, and government-to-government coordination.

Key Highlights:

- Reviewed PFAS contamination, water-quality concerns, and state response efforts.
- Summarized Chemours' PFAS activities and the 2019 Consent Order addressing air emissions, releases, and Cape Fear River contamination.
- Highlighted NCDEQ cleanup and remediation work, including GenX impacts in Bladen County.
- Provided information on the Bernard Allen PFAS Treatment System Reimbursement Program for sampling, testing, and filtration support.
- Encouraged Tribal communities to use NCDEQ resources to determine eligibility for PFAS assistance.
- Key priorities: Protect drinking water, monitor PFAS contamination, reduce emissions, remediate affected areas, and strengthen government coordination with Tribal communities.

Supporting Documentation

The handout of the PowerPoint presentation is on file with the Commission.



INFORMATION ITEM

NC Department of Transportation (Not Listed on the Agenda)

Presenter

Ms. Tonya Smith, Senior Director, NCDOT Office of Economic Opportunity and Compliance / Office of HBCU Outreach, provided updates.

Key Highlights

- NCDOT is establishing a statewide **Tribal Transportation Program** with dedicated staff and a new Program Manager position.
- Seeking partnership with the Commission and tribes to identify transportation needs and priorities.
- Collaboration areas include economic development, small business contracting, workforce development, tribal engagement, and the NC Clean Transportation Plan.
- NCDOT is in **Phase Two** of researching unmarked graves in roadway rights-of-way.
- Commissioners supported expanding contracting access for Native-owned businesses within NCDOT's **\$6–\$7 billion annual spending**.
- NCDOT attended the Unity Conference and made its first purchase from a Native American vendor.
- Discussion covered program structure, contracting opportunities, continued NCDOT involvement in meetings, and clean transportation efforts.

COMMENTS & REQUESTS FROM MEMBERS:

- Commissioners asked to gather community input for NCDOT; strong support expressed for NCDOT's initiatives.
- Ms. Smith affirmed NCDOT's commitment to ongoing collaboration.

No handout submitted.

Guest recognized

Commissioner Baucom requested Chair Bryant to recognize additional attendees who were in the audience, Ms. Brittany Hunt and Ms. Carly Graham. The Chairman expressed appreciation for their contributions.

COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS (Continued)

State and Federal Recognition Committee

Veterans Affairs Sub-Committee

Presenter:

Committee Chair Perry Hunt, Jr., Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina / Guilford Native American Association, provided a detailed update on the committee's review of the Catawba Nation's petition.

Key Highlights:

- The Recognition Committee met on Jan. 28, Feb. 17, and Mar. 18, 2026, to review tribal recognition matters.
- A hearing on the Catawba Nation's petition was held on Mar. 18, 2026. The committee recommended state recognition.



- The recommendation was presented to the full Commission on Apr. 14, 2026, and approved on Jun. 5, 2026.
- The committee continues monitoring U.S. House Bill 2929 regarding federal recognition for the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe.

Commission Discussion:

- The Commission affirmed the committee's recommendation to recognize the Catawba Nation as an American Indian tribe in North Carolina.
- Members expressed appreciation for Chair Hunt's leadership and the quality of recent meetings.
- Updates were shared on federal recognition efforts for the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe; monitoring continues.

Key Takeaways

- Catawba Nation Recognition: The Recognition Committee recommended recognition of the Catawba Nation on March 18, 2026.
- Commission Approval: The full Commission approved the recommendation on June 5, 2026.
- Federal Legislation Monitoring: The committee and staff continue monitoring U.S. House Bill 2929 regarding federal recognition of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe; status remains ongoing.

Public Record Request – Hatteras Petition for State Recognition Document – Mr. Elkton Richardson, Director, State Recognition Program

Committee Chair Hunt provided an overview of the public records request concerning the Roanoke Hatteras Indian Tribe. Staff is working with the Department of Administration's Public Affairs Office to address an additional request from an Outer Banks group. Chair Hunt also noted that the Commission's Administrative Rules for Tribal Recognition are scheduled for their decennial review in December 2026.

State Recognition Rules Review – Discussion – Mr. Gary Teague, Attorney, Department of Justice

Administrative Rules Review

Committee Chair Hunt requested Mr. Mark Teague, Attorney, Department of Justice, to present the Commission's review of its administrative rules pursuant to the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act.

Presentation: Administrative Rules Review

Presenter: Mark Teague, Attorney

Administrative Rules Review

- **Mr. Mark Teague, Attorney, Department of Justice,** presented a PowerPoint presentation. He reviewed the administrative rules review requirements and applicable deadlines. He stated that the Commission is required to review its administrative rules every ten years and that the current review must be completed by December 2026.



- Mr. Teague reviewed the criteria for determining whether a rule is necessary or unnecessary and summarized the Commission's eleven administrative rules, consisting of two rules concerning the Commission's internal operations and nine rules concerning recognition procedures.
- Mr. Teague further reviewed the required review process, including the initial determination, publication for public comment, consideration of public comments, final determination, and submission to the Rules Review Commission. He advised that the Commission's initial determination is due August 25, 2026, and emphasized the importance of meeting all applicable deadlines.

MOTIONS AND VOTES

Motion 1 – Executive Committee Rules

- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby made a motion to determine the **Executive Committee Rules to be unnecessary**. Commissioner Tony Hayes seconded the motion.
- The Chair called for discussion. There being no further discussion, the Chair called for a voice vote.
- **Vote:** All members present voted in favor by saying "Aye". The Ayes being the majority. **Motion carried.**

Motion 2 – Recognition Rule

- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby made a motion that the **Recognition Rule remain classified as necessary**. Commissioner Vee Oxendine seconded the motion.
- The Chair called for discussion. There being no further discussion, the Chair called for a voice vote.
- **Vote:** All members present voted in favor by saying "Aye". The Ayes being the majority. **Motion carried.**

Key Takeaways

- The Commission determined that the Executive Committee Rules are unnecessary and that the Recognition Rule remains necessary. The Commission's initial determination of its administrative rules is to be completed by August 25, 2026.

No handout was provided.

Legislative Committee:

Legislative Agenda Updates 2026

Committee Chair Tony Hayes provided a legislative update and noted communication challenges during the current session.

Key Highlights:

- Legislative Session: The state's \$2.6 billion revenue surplus has influenced legislative activity and may be affecting the current impasse.
- House Bill 224: Awaiting confirmation on status; bill missed the crossover deadline and is inactive this session.
- House Bill 214: Eminent domain language affecting Franklin County and others has been removed; no remaining concerns with the current version.



- Chair Hayes opened the floor for questions; no additional topics were raised.

No handout provided.

GUEST PRESENTATION (Continued)

Tribal Governance

Presenters: Ms. Lydia Locklear Canty and Ms. Amber Holland, Current Tribal Law & Policy, PLLC

Primary Presenter: Ms. Lydia Locklear

Key Highlights

- Overview of tribal governance, inherent sovereignty, and sovereign immunity, with focus on state-recognized tribes in NC.
- Current Tribal Law & Policy provides governance support, justice system development, economic planning, and legislative advocacy.
- Firm offers Tribal Governance Audits to help tribes assess governance structures and legal challenges.
- Sovereignty is inherent; recognition affirms existing sovereignty.
- Explained sovereign immunity and the need for narrowly tailored contractual waivers.
- Common legal issues include employment, personal injury, housing, and contract disputes.
- State-recognized tribes lack consistent immunity protections; NC has no clear statute, highlighted by ongoing Meherrin Nation litigation.
- Takeaways: Strong governance reduces legal risk; gaps in NC sovereign immunity protections; importance of precise contract language and proactive governance assessments.
- Chair Bryant thanked Ms. Locklear for the presentation and insights.

Supporting Documentation

The handout of the PowerPoint presentation is on file with the Commission.

OTHER BUSINESS ITEMS

FLOWER FUND REPORT

Presenter: Ms. Nadine Patrick, Secretary/Treasurer, NC Commission of Indian Affairs, provided the Flower Fund report.

Key Highlights:

- Thanked members who paid the annual \$24 dues; several contributed extra.
- Fund supports flower arrangements for hospitalized members and for families when a member passes; recently used for both.
- Contributions accepted via Cash App, cash, or preferred method.
- **Current fund balance: \$449.76.**
- Noted 8–10 members still need to submit dues and encouraged prompt payment.

No handout provided.



ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- It was noted that this meeting felt particularly productive and meaningful.
- The Chair highlighted growing pride in board service and appreciation for the structure and guidance offered by leadership.
- Commission members announced their upcoming events.

CLOSING PRAYER

Chair Bryant requested Vice-Chairwoman Dorothy Yates to lead the membership in a closing prayer.

ADJOURNMENT:

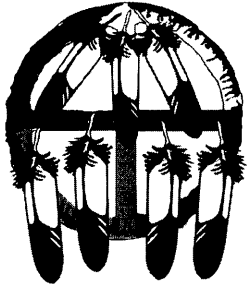
- There being no further business item to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 3:24 pm.
- The next Commission meeting is scheduled for September 4, 2026, location to be announced.

Nadine F. Patrick, Secretary-Treasurer
NC Commission of Indian Affairs
(Sign & Date)

Daphne Pinto, Recording Secretary
(Sign & Date)

These minutes were approved by the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs on September 4, 2026.

Nadine F. Patrick, Secretary-Treasurer
NC Commission of Indian Affairs
(Sign & Date)



N.C. COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

QUARTERLY MEETING

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Harris Alumni Center

Tate Hall

8688 Johnson Alumni Way

Charlotte, North Carolina 28223

June 5, 2026

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

DRAFT AGENDA

Meet and Greet Fellow Commission Members and Guests	9:30 am
Opening Session	10:00 am
Call to Order	Greg Bryant, Chairman
Invocation Acknowledgment of Fallen Warriors - This Quarter	Vernanda (VEE) Oxendine, Commission Member
Pledge of Allegiance	WD Baucom, Commission Member
Roll Call and Adoption of Agenda (State Present and Agree)	Daphne Pinto, Administrative Assistant
Ethics Statement	Gerald Goolsby, Commission Member
Presentation and Approval of March 4, 2026, Meeting Minutes	Chairman Bryant
Presentation and Approval of April 14, 2026, Special Meeting Minutes	Chairman Bryant
Tribute to Mr. Elton Ray Jacobs Acknowledgment of Ms. Reah Jacobs, elected to the Commission by the Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe to complete the term of Office for Mr. Elton Ray Jacobs	Commissioner WD Baucom
Welcome and Greetings	10:30 am
Mr. Jerry Sanderson, Chairman Metrolina Native American Association, Charlotte, NC Richard (Rich) Amon, Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs, University of North Carolina at Charlotte Gabriel Esparza, Secretary, NC Department of Administration	

Catawba Nation of South Carolina Petition	11:00 am
Discussion and Action regarding the Catawba Nation's Petition for State Recognition.	Perry Hunt, Chair, State Recognition Committee Elkton Richardson, Director, State Recognition Program
Remarks	Catawba Nation of South Carolina-representatives (Invited)
Guest Presentations	11:30 am
Catawba Nation Foundation	Tolani Franks, Program Officer for Indigenous Communities Catawba Nation Foundation
American Indian Health Updates	Ryan Dial (Lumbee) MCLS, MLS (ASCP) Program Manager, Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center UNC School of Medicine UNC American Indian Center
WORKING LUNCH	Noon - 1:00 pm
Blessing the food	Tony Hayes, Commission Member
Business Items:	1:00 pm
Executive Director's Report, Briefing (Highlights Only)	Greg Richardson, Executive Director,
Commission Committee Reports *Reports with action items only will be entertained.	1:20 pm – 3:00 pm
American Indian Culture & Religion Committee	Danny Bell, Chair
American Indian Housing NC Indian Housing Authority Appointment Recommendation – Vacancy for Lumbee Tribe	Harrison Jones, Chair
Ad hoc Indian Health Sub-Committee	Chairman Bryant
American Indian Education American Indian Child Welfare Sub-Committee	Michael Lambert, Chair
Economic Development, Employment Committee Environmental Justice and Agriculture NCDEQ and PFAS impacts in the vicinity of NC Tribal Communities	Craig McMillian, Chair Sushma Masemore, Deputy Secretary for Environment NC Department of Environmental Quality
State and Federal Recognition Veterans Affairs Sub-Committee	Perry Hunt, Chair, State Recognition Committee

Public Record Request: -Hatteras Petition for State Recognition Document	Elkton Richardson, Director, State Recognition Program
State Recognition Rules Review- Discussion	Gary Teague, Attorney NCDOJ
2025-2026 Commission's Legislative Agenda 2026 Legislative Agenda Updates SB 224 Funding for Commission/Tribes/Urban Organizations HB 214 – Franklin County Land Grab	Tony Hayes, Chair Wesley Kyatt, Legislative Liaison, NC Department of Administration
Guest Presentations (Continued)	
Tribal Governance Presentation	Amber Holland and Lydia Locklear Canty, Current Tribal Law & Policy, PLLC
Other Business Items	
Flower Fund Report	Nadine Patrick, Secretary/ Treasurer, NC Commission of Indian Affairs
Announcements (Items from Commission Members)	Chairman Bryant
Closing Prayer	Dorothy Yates, Commission Member
Adjournment	3:00 pm
Upcoming 2026 Commission Meetings: Meeting Sponsors Requested • September 4, 2026 – Location to be announced • December 4, 2026 – Location to be announced • March 2027, held in conjunction with the NC Indian Unity Conference, March 3-6, 2027, Hilton North Raleigh • June 4, 2027 – Location to be Announced Commission of Indian Affairs Website: Commission members are encouraged to review our new website at: https://www.doa.nc.gov/boards-commissions/commission-indian-affairs	