



NORTH CAROLINA COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

June 06, 2025

**Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
Magnolia Building
Tillman Dining Room
30 Tech Drive
Asheville, North Carolina 28801**

WELCOME: Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:55 a.m. The Chair welcomed everyone and acknowledged guests, Commission Members, Tribal Leaders, Chiefs, State Officials, and staff.

INVOCATION: Commissioner Vernanda (Vee) Oxendine acknowledged the Fallen Warriors (this Quarter) in the communities and presented a dynamic and inspirational invocation.

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

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

ROLL CALL:

TRIBAL AND ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Coharie	Isabell Freeman-Elliott	Absent
Coharie	Lenora Locklear	Absent
Cumberland County Association for Indian People	Harrison Jones	Present Approve
Cumberland County Association for Indian People	Tina Dicke	Present Approve
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Michael Lambert	Present Approve
Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation	Jarrett Crowe	Present (Arrived Late)
Guilford Native American Association	Perry L Hunt Jr.	Present Approve
Guilford Native American Association	DeVane Burnette, Sr.	Present Approve
Haliwa Saponi	Alfred Richardson	Present Approve
Haliwa Saponi	P. Sunshine Richardson	Present Approve
Lumbee	Larece Hunt	Present Approve
Lumbee	Ricky Burnett	Present Approve
Lumbee	Vernanda Oxendine	Present Approve
Meherrin	Constance Mitchell	Present Approve
Metrolina Native American Association	Walter D. Baucom	Absent
Metrolina Native American Association	Greg Bryant	Present Approve



ROLL CALL *(Continued)*

Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation	Tony Hayes	Present Approve
Sappony	Dorothy Yates	Present Approve
Triangle Native American Society	Danny Bell	Present Approve
Waccamaw Siouan	Elton R. Jacobs	Present Approve
Waccamaw Siouan	Nadine F. Patrick	Present Approve

STATE OFFICIALS

President Pro Tem Appointee	Gerald Goolsby	Present Abstain
Speaker of the House Appointee	Craig D. McMillian	Present Approve
Department of Administration (DOA), Gabriel J. Esparza, Secretary		
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: Betty Marrow Taylor, Chief Culture & Community Engagement Officer		Present Approve
Department of Environment Quality (DEQ), D. Reid Wilson, Secretary		
Designee: Jeff Hart, Environmental Justice Manager		Present Approve
Department of Health & Human Services, DevDutta Sangvai, Secretary		
Designee: Debra Farrington, Deputy Secretary Health Equity		Absent
Designee: Portia Pope, Acting Director, NCDHHS Office of Minority Health		Absent
Department of Labor, Luke Farley, Commissioner		
Designee: Chris Bullard		Absent
Department of Cultural Resources, Chris Southerly, Advisor,		
Adhoc- Non-Voting Member		Absent
Designee: Rosie Blewitt, Assistant State Archaeologist and Site Registrar		

OTHER STATE OFFICIALS

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

NCNAYO	Kaylee Evans (Co-Chair) - Non-Voting Member	Absent
	Vacant (Co-Chair) – Non-Voting Member	Absent
NC NACOHE	Thorn Grove - Non-Voting Member	Present

The Chair declared that a quorum existed; therefore, the meeting could proceed with the agenda being approved.

STAFF PRESENT

Gregory Richardson, Executive Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs
Candace Lowry, Deputy Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs
Daphne Pinto, Administrative Secretary to the Executive Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs
Stephen (Steve) Maynor, Program Director, Section 8 Housing Program
Elkton (Elk) Richardson, Program Director, State Recognition Program
Kimberly Hammonds, Program Director, Supporting Undergraduate Native Students (SUNS) Program
Pamela (Shena) Brewington, Program Director, Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)



Maria Richardson, Program Director, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program
Tenley (Nikki) Locklear, Program Director, Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program
Laury Chavis, Program Director, Tobacco Survey Program
Ashley Patrick, Program Coordinator, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program
Brittany Bullard, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program

OTHERS PRESENT: Rep. Jarrod Lowery (Lumbee), Republican, District 47, Robeson County, NC, General Assembly, The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) delegation, and The Tuscarora Nation of New York delegation attended the meeting. All attendees signed the attendance sheet, and a list A list of attendees is on file with the Commission.

ETHICS STATEMENT: Director Richardson read the Ethics Statement on Behalf of Chairman Bryant and urged Commission Members to declare any conflicts of interest or the appearances of any conflicts of interest that may exist in relation to any matters before the Commission, as mandated by the State Ethics Act. Commissioner Elton Ray Jacobs abstained due to the Housing Committee appointments before the Commission, and Commissioner Sunshine Richardson abstained due to USDA grant matters before the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 06, 2025, MEETING MINUTES: March 06, 2025, minutes were presented for adoption.

MOTION: Commissioner Tony Hayes moved to approve March 06, 2025, minutes. Commissioner Gerald Goolsby seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any objection to the motion. None was noted. The motion was approved.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 13, 2025, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES: March 13, 2025, minutes were presented for adoption.

MOTION: Commissioner Larece Hunt moved to approve March 13, 2025, minutes. Commissioner Gerald Goolsby seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any objection to the motion. None was noted. The motion was approved.

WELCOME REMARKS:

Greeting and Welcoming Remarks: Dr. John D. Gossett, President, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, welcomed Commission Members, guests, and staff in attendance to Western North Carolina. He presented a brief overview of the Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. He was happy to host the Commission meeting. Dr. Gossett discussed the devastation Hurricane Helene has caused and its recovery process. It was noted that there are still pockets of the area that need reconstruction and repair. He is happy that the college is open. He urged everyone to tour the Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College and Asheville.

Michell Hicks, Principal Chief Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI): Chief Hicks presented a brief remark and noted that Eastern Band understands the importance of collaboration, sovereignty, and respect of tribal governance. He thanked the Commission for inviting the EBCI delegation to attend the meeting. Chair Bryant acknowledged Chief Hicks and his delegation. He thanked them for attending the meeting.



Video Message from Gabriel Esparza, Secretary, NC Department of Administration: Ms. Noelle Talley, Deputy Secretary, NC Department of Administration, presented the video message from Secretary Gabriel Esparza.

The highlights are as follows:

- It was noted that there were funding cuts, and the appeal process is ongoing.
- Congratulated Chairman Greg Bryant's appointment by Governor Josh Stein as Chairman of the NC Commission of Indian Affairs, effective March 10, 2025.
- Secretary Esparza thanked the outgoing Chairman Rev. Ricky Burnett, whose term ended in March 2025, for his outstanding and dedicated service as Chair of the Commission.
- He acknowledged the Commission members whose terms end June 30, 2025, and thanked them for their dedicated service.
- Secretary Esparza expressed appreciation for the work the Commission is doing to provide housing, workforce development, services to address domestic violence, and low-income energy assistance for our state's senior citizens.
- Secretary Esparza thanked Dr. Gossett, President Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College for hosting the Commission Meeting. He thanked the Commission for holding its June meeting in Asheville, to support the local economy as the community recovers from Hurricane Helen's devastation.

Chair Bryant paused the meeting briefly and requested that everyone present introduce themselves.

GUEST PRESENTATIONS:

2025 American Indian Related Bills Introduced in the NC General Assembly – Overview and

Highlights: It was noted that Rep. Jarrod Lowery is running behind schedule. Therefore, his presentation was moved to a later time during the meeting.

Trillium Health Resources, a Leading Specialty Care Manager (LME/MCO), provides Services in American Indian Communities in North Carolina:

Ms. Sheena Richardson, Haliwa-Saponi Tribal Liaison, Trillium Health Resources, presented a PowerPoint presentation on Trillium Health Resources.

The following information was discussed and presented:

- Trillium Health Resources provides services and resources to American Indian Communities. The services provided are Mental Health, Substance Use, Traumatic Brain Injuries, and Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services across forty-six counties in North Carolina.
- Trillium Health Resources has four managed care organizations across North Carolina.
- Discussed the Types of NC Medicaid Plans.
- It was noted that Trillium Health Resources serves six of the eight tribes in North Carolina. They are as follows: Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), Coharie, Haliwa-Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin, Waccamaw Siouan, and Guilford Native American Association.
- It was noted that the North Carolina Native American Indian population is most likely to have health problems related to substance use, including overdoses, alcohol-related deaths, and emergency room visits.
- Across the Nation, Native Americans are more likely to report mental illness. American Indians have the highest rate of death by suicide.
- Discussed Tribal Engagement, Tribal Sponsorships, and Tribal Outreach efforts.



- Trillium Health Resources partners with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS).
- Trillium has a Behavioral Health Crisis Line, and Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (24-hours/7-days)
- Discussed NC Medicaid for North Carolinians.

No handout was submitted.

CHAIRMAN'S PRESENTATION:

- Commission Member Leadership Expectations.
- Chair Bryant read an excerpt from the General Statutes, the Mission of the Commission.
- The Chair indicated that members should reach out to their Legislators/ District Representatives on behalf of their communities to advocate for the Commission and its interests.
- It was noted that members assigned to the Committee must commit to attending meetings. A quorum is required for action items.
- Members can email Chair Bryant and Mr. Greg Richardson if they wish to switch from one committee to another, join additional Committees, be removed from a committee, etc. Members were urged to serve on a minimum of two or three committees, so there is no overlap in Committee meetings or committee activities.

No handout was submitted.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS AND GUEST:

- Chief Michelle Hicks, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), stated that he did not appreciate the letter the Commission sent to him during the month of December 2024. He noted that disagreements should be handled in an amicable way moving forward. Chief Hicks suggested that there needs to be communication between tribes to avoid future misunderstandings.
- Chair Bryant apologized on behalf of the Commission. He noted that both entities need to have mutual respect.

2025 American Indian Related Bills Introduced in the NC General Assembly – Overview and Highlights: Rep. Jarrod Lowery, (Lumbee) Republican – District 47, Robeson County, NC General Assembly presented this item. The highlights are as follows:

- Discussed HB 224, Resources into tribal communities, to find recurring funding.
- Appropriation for Hurricane Helene recovery.
- Discussed funding directly to Indian tribes.
- Discussed funding for Commission operations and programs.
- Discussed funding for staff support, Department of Indian Education.
- Discussed HB 655, Offensive Union Mascot Bill.
- Discussed a Bill allowing American Indians to hunt fish with Tribal ID Cards. Rep. Lowery is working to amend the Bill, "American Indian Hunting Fishing Right." It was noted that Rep. Lowery is in consultation with the Wildlife Services and Wildlife Commission for solutions regarding American Indians fishing freely without restrictions.
- Rep. Lowery discussed the Bill on Scholarpath. He is working on appropriating funds from the NC Department of Public Instruction to the Commission. The funds will be \$500,000, and the



Commission will employ two individuals who will go to the schools and meet with graduate seniors to help them make career decisions and ensure that they are career ready.

- Rep. Lowery urged members to get to know their legislators.

No handout was submitted.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- Commission members asked clarifying questions.
- Principal Chief Hicks, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, expressed concerns. He requested Rep. Lowery to reach out to each tribe representing this Commission.
- Commission Member Gerald Goolsby, Parliamentarian, suggested that public comments can be made only if they have obtained prior permission and acknowledged by the Chairman.
- Commissioner Michael Lambert commented on HB224, he noted that every tribe was consulted except the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Commissioner Lambert requested Rep. Lowery to reach out to all the tribes before any Bill goes forward in the House or the Senate because it affects the American Indians of North Carolina.
- Chair Bryant thanked Commissioner Lambert for his comments.
- Commissioner Dorothy Yates, member of the Recognition Committee, expressed concerns about different tribes obtaining state recognition through the General Assembly. Commissioner Yates noted that the Tuscarora group from North Carolina is seeking state recognition. It was noted that the decision taken by the Recognition Committee on the splinter group is not a personal or vindictive one, that the State recognition guidelines dictate how the decision to deny them state recognition.
- Commissioner Yates indicated that the Recognition Committee is seeking further clarification for the Recognition Committee as well as for the petitioner seeking state recognition. Commissioner Yates noted that the State Recognition Committee follows the procedures set by the Commission's legislation and the state recognition procedures.
- Rep. Lowery noted that he has been in every legislative session in which the Tuscarora recognition bill has been discussed. He has explained to the leadership that the legislature mandates the Commission to follow the General Statutes and the State Recognition procedures.
- Mr. Greg Richardson introduced the delegation from the Tuscarora Nation of New York. He informed Chair Bryant that the Chief of the Tuscarora Nation of New York wants to address his concerns on various tribes petitioning and seeking recognition as the Tuscarora Nation.
- The Chief of the Tuscarora Nation of New York noted that the Tuscarora splinter group should not be recognized. He noted that the Tuscarora Nation of New York is federally recognized, it is the original tribe that is fully recognized and certified. He stated that it is a violation of their sovereignty if another Tuscarora or splitter group from Robeson County is recognized.
- Rep. Lowery thanked the Chief of the Tuscarora Nation of New York for his comments and for expressing his concerns on behalf of the Tuscarora Nation of New York.
- Commission members expressed concerns about an issue concerning students wearing feathers during graduation ceremonies at graduation services in some schools in NC. Discussion ensued. Rep. Lowery noted that he will send a memo to all schools (115 School Districts) before graduation, regarding this matter, and cite the legislation authorizing students to wear feathers.
- Commissioner Tony Hayes, Legislative Committee Chair, asked Rep. Lowery on the future of American Indian Youth Leadership Program, and the Indian Child Welfare Program funding.



- Discussed HB 171, DEI Bill.
- Chair Bryant thanked Rep. Lowery for attending the Commission meeting and for all he has been doing for this Commission and North Carolina's American Indian Population while serving in the NC General Assembly.

COMMISSION WORK SESSION:

Commissioners—Duties and Responsibilities: Mr. Evin Grant, Director of Policy, Strategy, & External Relations, NC Department of Administration, and Ms. Jordan Etters, Program Coordinator, NC Department of Administration, presented this item. A handout was included in the Board packet for members to review prior to the meeting.

The following was discussed:

- The rules (attendance rules) and the expectations of the Board.
- The Purpose and Goals, Mission, and Vision
- The Executive Branch of the North Carolina Government
- The Department of Administration and its various Divisions.
- The roles of the Agency and roles of the Members who act in the duty of public service and as partners to state government while representing the communities, tribes, organizations, and the Department of Administration.
- Discussed important Statutes: Meeting of Public Bodies, Roberts Rule of Order, and Public Records
- Discussed Ethics Requirements: State Government Ethics Act (Chapter 138A)
- Discussed Expectations
- Discussed Conduct of Members (Attendance & Quorum, Active Participation, Motions & Voting, Debate & Discussion, Robert's Rules of Order).

The Work Session handout distributed in the Board packet is on file at the Commission.

WORKING LUNCH:

Chairman Bryant announced the lunch break at 11:41 a.m. Commissioner Tony Hayes blessed the food. The meeting was called back to order at 12:34 p.m.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Executive Director's Report: Mr. Greg Richardson, Executive Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs presented this item. The Executive Director's Report was distributed in the Board packet before the Commission meeting.

The highlights are as follows:

- Acknowledged and welcomed Ms. Christy Agner, Governor's Western North Carolina Office, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians delegation, and the Tuscarora Nation of New York delegation in attendance at the meeting.
- It was noted that a few Commission Members will be attending the Mid-Year National Congress of American Indian Conference, June 2025.
- Reviewed list of expiring terms of Commission Members effective June 30, 2025
- Recommended the Annual Report 2023-2024 is an action item for approval.
- Discussed The North Carolina Indian Cultural Center Fund.



- Indicated that grant funds were awarded during the month of May 2025 for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Supporting Undergraduate Native Students (SUNS) Programs.
- Discussed the impact of budget cuts this quarter regarding the Tobacco Survey Program and USDA Housing Packaging Programs.
- Noted that the American Indian License Plate funds will be addressed later. Mr. Richardson informed the Commission that Ms. Maria Richardson will be the contact person for the AI License Plate fund.
- Discussed the Lumbee Day Home Parade Event and the Commission's involvement in the Lumbee Home Coming. An information booth will be set up, and we will have vehicles in the Homecoming parade.
- Indicated that Rep. Lowery's Bills introduced this session are included in the Executive Director's Report.
- Noted that the 2026 NC Indian Unity Conference will be held in Raleigh, NC, in March 2026. This will be a four-day event. Therefore, the March 2026 Commission meeting will need to be held on Wednesday, which will be the first day of the conference.
- Members were urged to read the Executive Director's report in its entirety and use the information as a guide when making reports to their tribal councils and at other community meetings.

The Executive Director's Report is on file and is an official part of the minutes.

ACTION ITEM #1:

Annual Report 2023-2024: Mr. Greg Richardson requested a motion to approve the Annual Report 2023-2024.

MOTION:

- Commissioner Alfred Richardson moved to approve the Annual Report 2023-2024 as presented. Commissioner Sunshine Richardson seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any objection to the motion. None was noted. The motion was approved.

ACTION ITEM #2:

NC Indian Cultural Center Fund: Mr. Greg Richardson noted that funding in the amount of \$24,000 was provided from the court-ordered sale of the Indian Culture Center property in Robeson County. The Commission's allocation of the funding was approved at the September 2023 Commission meeting. However, the balance of funding in the account, \$16,307.58, must be expended at this time. The excerpt of the September 2023 Meeting Minutes was distributed in the Board Packet for members to review. Mr. Richardson requested a motion to approve the reallocation of the remaining funds as follows:

- Sponsor Commission members to attend the 2025 National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Convention: Designate \$8,153.78 to cover the cost of registration fees to attend the 2025 NCAI Convention in Seattle, Washington. It was noted that the registration fee will be paid by June 30, 2025, if possible.
- Sponsor Students to attend the 2025 NC Native American Youth Organization (NCNAYO) Conference: Designate \$8,153.78 to cover the cost of registration fees for students to attend the 2025 NCNAYO Conference, Wilmington, NC, June 19-June 22, 2025. Mr. Richardson noted that we had twenty-three students on the sponsorship list.



- It was noted that these funds must be expended now, and failure to do so may result in the NC General Assembly reallocating or reassigning the amount to other causes.

MOTION:

- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby moved to approve the NC Indian Cultural Center Fund as presented. Commissioner Tony Hayes seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any objection to the motion. None was noted. The motion was approved.
- Mr. Greg Richardson noted that Mr. Thorn Grove, NC Native American College Organization on Higher Education (NCNACOHE) Representative needs to attend the 2025-National Unity Conference, San Diego, CA, June 27-July 1, 2025. Commissioner Gerald Goolsby made a motion to modify the previous motion to include Representative Thorn Grove registration and travel expenses. Commissioner Danny Bell seconded the motion.
- Members requested clarification on the 2025 National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Convention. It was noted that the approval amount of \$900 at the September 2023 meeting still stands and would be the maximum a commission member can receive for attending the NCAI Convention. The following members were approved: Danny Bell, Gerald Goolsby, Nadine Patrick, and Alfred Richardson.
- It was noted that the rollover funds will be expended at the NCAI Convention this fall, November 16-21, 2025. Members need to provide their names prior to the September 2025 meeting for approval purposes.

PowerPoint Presentation of Commission Program and Services: Ms. Candace Lowry, Deputy Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs, presented this item. Ms. Lowry gave a brief overview of the Commission of Indian Affairs' Mission and Vision. A handout of the PowerPoint presentation was distributed for members to follow along. The following was discussed:

- CIA Analytical Overview of the Programs
- Section 8 Vouchers Issued FY 2024-2025, Quarterly Comparison
- Number of Clients Assisted under Victim Services FY 2024-2025, Quarterly Comparison
- Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) Referrals FY 2024-2025, Quarterly Comparison.
- Workforce Innovations & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Students Served, FY 2024-2025, Quarterly Comparison.
- FY 2024-2025 Planned Projects & Initiative Update: Discussed the following: WIOA Program; Economic Development & Employment and Training; Housing Services Expansion (New); Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, Healthy Blue Funding (New), to receive a grant for Indian Child Welfare Advocacy Program Activities; State Recognition Program
- Risks and Challenges; Fiscal Impacts; and Successes.
- A video presentation of NCDOT collaborating with NCCIA. It was noted that the video link will be provided to members after the meeting.
- Discussed the Hurricane Helene Recovery and the Youth Leadership Program.

Strategic Plan Highlights: Ms. Candace Lowry, Deputy Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs, presented the Strategic Plan. A copy of the Strategic Plan was previously distributed to the Commission members. The following was discussed:

- Meetings and Events hosted by NC Commission of Indian Affairs: Ms. Lowry read the goal and objective indicated on Page 8. The Commission has accomplished this goal and objective.



- Professional Development: Ms. Lowry read the goal and objective as indicated on Page 9. It was noted that new members will receive orientation. Ms. Lowry urged members to read the By-Laws.
- Members were requested to take the Leadership training course at Campbell University.
- Discussed the NCCIA Program Director's reports to be incorporated into the Committee reports. Page 10. Members were urged to work alongside the Program Directors.
- American Indian Legislative Day was discussed. Page 11. Ms. Lowry urged members of the Legislative Committee to work with the Committee Chair to plan and organize the event.
- Ms. Lowry requested members to read the Strategic Plan. It was noted that the Strategic Plan can act as a guide. She encouraged members to work with their committees.

No handout was submitted.

Executive Director's Report (Continued):

Mr. Greg Richardson highlighted the following:

- Waccamaw Siouan – Bridge naming event
- Historic Marker Event - Commemorate the Old Historic High Schools in the State by the NC Cultural Resources Commission.

COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS ONLY:

American Indian Culture & Religion Committee: No report

American Indian Housing: Committee Chair, Elton Ray Jacobs, noted that he had a committee meeting but no quorum. He presented the following.

ACTION ITEM:

NC Indian Housing Authority Appointment Recommendation. A vote for members whose terms end 06/30/2025. The NC Commission of Indian Affairs' Indian Housing Committee met on June 03, 2025, and supports the decision of the Haliwa Saponi Tribe recommending the following:

- **Dr. Joseph O Richardson – First Priority**
- Mr. Tyler Richardson – Second Priority

MOTION:

- Commissioner Alfred Richardson moved to approve the NC Commission of Indian Affairs' Indian Housing Committee recommendation as presented. Commissioner Jarret Crowe seconded the motion.
- The Chair noted that coming from the Committee requires no second. The Chair asked if there was any objection to the motion. None was noted. The motion was approved.

The NC Commission of Indian Affairs' Indian Housing Committee meeting minutes, June 03, 2025, and the Action Item are on file at the Commission.

Ad hoc Indian Health Sub-Committee: Committee Chair Greg Bryant announced that Ms. Tenley (Nikki) Locklear will present the following item.

Domestic Violence Program and Sexual Assault Program – Baby Diaper Giver Event.

Ms. Tenley (Nikki) Locklear, DV SA Program Manager, presented this item as follows.



- Discussed the diaper and wipes giveaway (hygiene giveaway) in the Indian communities.
- The funding for the hygiene products comes from the Family Violence Prevention Grant.
- Discussed awareness information for a healthy relationship.
- The Family Violence Prevention Awareness Program held a big event in Pembroke, NC, in collaboration with Pembroke Hardware. The Family Resource and Wellness event was successful, with over 300 people in attendance.
- It was noted that over 1,000 people received diapers and wipes in the Indian communities, and over 800 students received school supplies.
- Members were informed to contact Ms. Locklear if they needed to have a Family Violence Prevention Awareness Giveaway Event in their community.

The handout of the American Indian Health Subcommittee (Victim Services) Notes from the 5-28-25 meeting was submitted and is kept on file at the Commission.

American Indian Education and American Indian Child Welfare Sub-Committee: Committee Chair Dorothy Yates presented this item. The Education Committee Meeting Minutes dated June 4, 2025, and the Action Item were distributed at the meeting. The following was discussed:

- NC American Indian Fund Scholarship, 2025 Report was distributed in the Board packet. Committee Chair Yates informed members to encourage students to apply. The funding for the scholarship is from the American Indian License Plates that are sold. It was noted that 35 students applied for the scholarship, and the committee approved 25 students due to a lack of funding.

ACTION ITEM:

- Committee Chair Yates made a recommendation to the NC Commission of Indian Affairs (NCCIA) to compose and send correspondence to the planners of the NC Social Studies Conference to offer more sessions on NC state-recognized tribes at their NC Social Studies Conference. It was noted that at the last NC Social Studies Conference, only one session was offered to the NC State Recognized Tribes.

MOTION:

- Committee Chair Yates recommended that the NC Commission of Indian Affairs issue a letter to the planners of the NC Social Studies Conference, as stated above.
- Chair Bryant noted that coming from the Committee does not require a second.
- The Chair asked if there were any questions or objections to the motion. The motion was approved with no objection from the membership.

The handout of the Education Committee Meeting Minutes dated June 4, 2025, and the Action Item is on file at the Commission.

Economic Development & Employment Committee, Environmental Justice, and Agriculture Sub-Committees: Committee Chair Craig McMillian presented this item. The highlights are as follows:

- **Youth Leadership Program:** A formal letter was submitted to Rep. Jarrod Lowery to allocate financial support for the Youth Leadership Initiative and a partnership with ScholarPath. The initiative aims to provide meaningful academic and career readiness opportunities for American Indian Youth.



- **ScholarPath:** Discussed the ScholarPath being part of the Youth Leadership Program
- **NCAI & NCDOT Collaboration:** The NCCIA and NCDOT tour at the Met Conference facility in Charlotte, NC, was discussed. Committee Chair McMillian thanked Commissioner WD Baucom and Chair Bryant for their support of the Metrolina Organization in their community. The event was noted to have been successful, with 55 participants, including small business owners.
- **Business Symposium:** Discussed the planning of a business symposium with the Lumbee Tribe in UNC-Pembroke. More details will follow. The Committee is working on the sponsorship letter and policies.
- **Business Directory:** Brittany Bullard is the point of contact for the Business Directory.
- **Environmental Information:** Discussed the Environmental Justice information on water quality and water testing efforts in Robeson County, focusing on potential impacts on local industries. The Committee continues to receive environmental updates.
- **Agricultural Opportunities:** Committee Chair McMillian noted that a meeting needs to be scheduled with Commissioner Steve Troxler, NC Department of Agriculture, to discuss expanded agricultural opportunities for the tribal communities.
- **NCDEQ Grant Funding:** Discussed the Grant funding available for small equipment from the North Carolina Department of Environment Quality (NCDEQ).
- **Utility Apprentice Program:** Discussed the Utility Apprentice Program, a pilot program of thirteen weeks at Robeson Community College. This program provides fourteen job skill sets for the construction utility workforce. The average starting pay is approximately \$25/ hour. Additional details will follow.
- **Water Quality and Water Testing Outreach:** Committee Chair McMillian read information provided by Dr. Ryan Emanuel on the significance of water quality on the upstream and downstream water sampling project and the residential water sampling project. The test is conducted to check for Acholi, Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Metals, and other contamination.

No handout was submitted.

ACTION ITEM:

- The Committee Chair, McMillian, recommended that the Commission issue a letter of support along with the resolution. The Committee Chair, McMillian, read the draft resolution in its entirety.
- Mr. Greg Richardson advised the Commission that the NC Department of Administration (DOA) would need to be removed from the draft resolution, as DOA is not adopting it; the Commission that is taking this action.
- Deputy Secretary Noelle Talley noted that she understands and appreciates the concern regarding water quality, but she does not think that the Environmental Justice Committee can speak on behalf of the Department of Administration or the Department of Quality. She noted that the Committee is certainly welcome to speak and raise concerns on their own.

MOTION:

- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby made a substitute motion to include the modification to remove the Department of Administration from the draft Resolution on Environmental Justice and Water Quality issue in Robeson County, NC. Commissioner Danny Bell seconded the motion.



- The Chair asked if there were any questions or objections to the motion. None was noted. The motion was approved.

State and Federal Recognition, Veterans Affairs Sub-Committee: Committee Chair Larece Hunt noted that he did not have a quorum for the recent State Recognition Committee meeting. He provided a brief update. No action item.

No handout was submitted.

2024-2025 Commission's Legislative Agenda: Committee Chair Tony Hayes noted that he does not have any updates at this time. He requested Mr. Wesley Kyatt to provide an update. Mr. Wesley Kyatt, Legislative Liaison, NC Department of Administration, provided a brief update on DOGE and Budget cuts across the board for all agencies. Other discussions included tax rates and tax cuts.

2026 Legislative Agenda: Mr. Greg Richardson requested Members to submit their 2026 Legislative Agenda requests to Chair Hayes by November 2025, so the Legislative Committee can review and bring the recommendation to the full Commission at the December 2025 meeting.

No handout was submitted.

COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION:

- Commissioner Yates requested clarification on the allocation of funds to the Tribes that is being requested from the NC General Assembly. Committee Chair Hayes noted that Rep. Jarrod Lowery addressed that during his remarks earlier in the meeting. He noted that the allocation for the Tribes is in process at the General Assembly.

OTHER BUSINESS ITEMS:

FLOWER FUND REPORT: Ms. Candace Lowry, Deputy Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs, presented this item on behalf of Commissioner Nadine Patrick, Secretary/ Treasurer, who had to leave the meeting earlier. The following was discussed:

- Expense: One purchase made in March 2025, for Commissioner Jarrett Crowe.
- Collected and Deposited: \$100 at the March 2025 meeting
- Current balance in the Flower Fund: \$578.61 as of May 2025 statement.
- Ms. Candace Lowry informed members that the annual payment per member is \$24. Payments can be made via Credit Card, Check, Cash, or Cash App. Members need to contact Commissioner Patrick directly. Ms. Lowry thanked everyone for their contribution.

No handout was submitted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- Commission members announced their upcoming events.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Chair Bryant requested Commissioner Dorothy Yates to lead the membership in a closing prayer.



ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Bryant requested a motion to adjourn.

- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Larece Hunt seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- The meeting adjourned at 2:12 pm.
- The next Commission meeting is scheduled for September 5, 2025. Location TBD.

Nadine F. Patrick

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

Daphne Pinto 9-5-25

Daphne Pinto, Recording Secretary
(Sign & Date)

These minutes were approved by the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs on September 5, 2025

Nadine F. Patrick

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



N.C. COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

QUARTERLY MEETING

Asheville–Buncombe Technical Community College

**Magnolia Building
Tillman Dining Room
30 Tech Drive
Asheville, North Carolina 28801**

**June 6, 2025
8:30 am – 2:00 pm
DRAFT AGENDA**

Meet and Greet Fellow Commission Members and Guest	8:30 am
Opening Session	9:00 am
Call to Order	Greg Bryant, Chairman
Invocation Acknowledgment of Fallen Warriors -This Quarter	Vernanda (VEE) Oxendine, Commission Member
Pledge of Allegiance	Danny Bell, Commission Member
Roll Call and Adoption of Agenda (State Present and Agree)	Daphne Pinto, Administrative Assistant
Ethics Statement	Gregory Richardson, Executive Director
Presentation and Approval of March 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes	Chairman Bryant
Presentation and Approval of March 13, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes	Chairman Bryant
Greetings and Welcoming Remarks:	Dr. John D. Gossett, President Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
	Michell Hicks, Principal Chief Eastern Band of Cherokee
	Video Message from Gabriel Esparza, Secretary, NC Department of Administration
	Introduction by Noelle Talley, Deputy Secretary NC Department of Administration
Guest Presentations:	10:30 am

2025 American Indian Related Bills Introduced in the NC General Assembly – Overview and Highlights	Rep. Jarrod Lowery, (Lumbee) Republican - District 47, Robeson County, NC General Assembly
Trillium Health Resources a Leading Specialty Care Manager (LME/MCO) and Provides Services in American Indian Communities in North Carolina.	Sheena Richardson, MS (Haliwa-Saponi), Tribal Liaison Trillium Health Resources
Chairman's Presentation Commission Member Leadership Expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Officials Commission Members 	Chairman Bryant
Commission Work Session:	11:00 am - Noon
Commissioners - Duties and Responsibilities	Evin L. Grant, Director of Policy, Strategy, & External Relations, NC Department of Administration Jordan Etters, Program Coordinator, NC Department of Administration
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) Staff Quarterly Program Reports (Included in meeting packet) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PowerPoint Presentation - Commission Programs and Services to American Communities Strategic Plan Highlights - Legislative Day - Action Item Expiring Terms of Commission Members June 30, 2025 Draft Annual Report 2023-2024 -Action Item 	Greg Richardson, Executive Director, and Candace Lowery, Deputy Director
Commission Committee Reports *Reports with action items only will be entertained.	1:20 pm – 2:00 pm
American Indian Culture & Religion Committee	Danny Bell, Chair
American Indian Housing NC Indian Housing Authority Appointment Recommendation	Elton Ray Jacobs, Chair
Adhoc Indian Health Sub-Committee Domestic Violence Program and Sexual Assault Program -	Chairman Bryant Nikki Locklear, Program Director

Baby Diaper Giver Events	
American Indian Education American Indian Child Welfare Sub-Committee	Dorothy Yates, Chair
Economic Development & Employment Committee Environmental Justice Agriculture Run Off /Pollution Near Campbell Soup Property in Robeson County	Craig McMillian, Chair
State and Federal Recognition Veterans Affairs Sub-Committee	Larece Hunt, Chair
2024-2025 Commission's Legislative Agenda	Tony Hayes, Chair
2025 Legislative Agenda Update	Wesley Kyatt, Legislative Liaison, NC Department of Administration
ScholarPath-Youth Leadership Bill	Craig McMillian, Vice Chairman - NCCIA
Other Business Items	
Flower Fund Report	Nadine Patrick, Secretary/ Treasurer, NC Commission of Indian Affairs
Items from Commission Members and Announcements	Chairman Bryant
Closing Prayer	Dorothy Yates, Commission Member
Adjournment	2:00 pm
<p>Upcoming 2025 Commission Meetings: Meeting Sponsors Requested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 5, 2025 – Location to be announced December 5, 2025 – Location to be announced March 4-7, 2026, held in conjunction with the 2026 NC Indian Unity Conference (Date and Location Pending) <p>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</p>	