



# **NORTH CAROLINA COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**

**September 05, 2025**

**James A. Thomas Hall, Event Room 225  
University of North Carolina, Pembroke  
1 University Road  
Pembroke, North Carolina 28372**

**WELCOME:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The Chair welcomed everyone and acknowledged guests, Commission Members, Tribal Leaders, Chiefs, State Officials, and staff.

**INVOCATION:** Commissioner Dr. Michael Lambert acknowledged the Fallen Warriors (this Quarter) in the communities and presented an inspirational invocation. A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of the Fallen Warriors and the September 11<sup>th</sup> victims.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Gerald Goolsby 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:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, noted that when Commission members' names are called, each member will need 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	Present Approve
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 Approve
Guilford Native American Association	Perry L Hunt Jr.	Present Approve
Guilford Native American Association	Amanda J Ballard	Present Approve
Haliwa Saponi	Alfred Richardson	Present Approve
Haliwa Saponi	P. Sunshine Richardson	Present Approve
Lumbee	Larece Hunt	Present Approve
Lumbee	Ricky Burnett	Absent
Lumbee	Vernanda Oxendine	Present Approve
Meherrin	Edward Livingston	Present Approve



### **ROLL CALL** *(Continued)*

Metrolina Native American Association	Walter D. Baucom	Absent
Metrolina Native American Association	Greg Bryant	Present Approve
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 (Arrived late)

### **STATE OFFICIALS**

President Pro Tem Appointee	Gerald Goolsby	Present Approve
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		Present Approve
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), D. Reid Wilson, Secretary		
Designee: Jeff Hart, Environmental Justice Manager		Present
Department of Health & Human Services, DevDutta Sangvai, Secretary		
Designee: Debra Farrington, Deputy Secretary Health Equity		
Designee: Portia Pope, Acting Director, NCDHHS Office of Minority Health		Present Approve
Department of Labor, Luke Farley, Commissioner		
Designee: Chris Bullard		Absent
Department of Cultural Resources, Chris Southerly, Advisor,		
Adhoc- <b>Non-Voting Member</b>		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 Kenly McLaurin (Co-Chair) - <b>Non-Voting Member</b>	Absent
Vacant (Co-Chair) – <b>Non-Voting Member</b>	Absent
NC NACOHE Thorn Grove - <b>Non-Voting Member</b>	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  
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

**OTHERS PRESENT:** 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. No conflicts were noted.

**APPROVAL OF JUNE 06, 2025, MEETING MINUTES:** June 06, 2025, minutes were presented for adoption.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Tony Hayes moved to approve the minutes of June 6, 2025. Commissioner Alfred Richardson seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any objection to the motion. None was noted. The motion was approved.

**MEMORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT FROM GOVERNOR JOSH STEIN:**

The Chair read the letter from Governor Josh Stein and presented it to Mrs. Vickie Bell. Mr. Greg Richardson, Executive Director, presented a brief remark on the Late Dr. Joseph Bell. Mr. Richardson acknowledged and remembered the legacy of the late Dr. Joseph Bell. Chair Bryant and Mr. Greg Richardson together presented the Long Leaf Pine certificate signed by Governor Josh Stein, and the State Flag flown at the Capitol to Mrs. Vickie Bell in Honor of the Late Dr. Joseph Bell. The family members of Dr. Joseph Bell were recognized. A group photograph was taken.

**WELCOME REMARKS:**

**Greeting and Welcoming Remarks:**

Mr. John Lowery, Chair of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, welcomed everyone to the James A. Thomas Hall. He gave a brief overview as follows:

- Recognized Ms. Taylor Davis, Miss Lumbee 2025-2026, North Carolina.
- Provided an overview of the key activities at the Lumbee tribe of North Carolina.
- Discussed goals and budget for the Lumbee tribe of North Carolina

No handout was submitted.

Dr. Robin Cummings, Chancellor of the University of North Carolina Pembroke, welcomed everyone to the UNC-Pembroke campus. He noted that he is proud and honored to serve as Chancellor at the University of Pembroke. He presented a PowerPoint presentation which gave an overview as follows:

- Dr. Cummings thanked Chair Mr. Greg Bryant, Mr. Greg Richardson, and Secretary Gabriel Esparza for their dedication, commitment, and leadership.



- Dr. Cummings noted that UNC-Pembroke is the third-oldest public education system in North Carolina. It was established on March 7, 1887, by American Indians for the benefit of American Indians.
- Dr. Cummings emphasized key initiatives and programs at UNC-Pembroke.
- It was noted that UNC-Pembroke is an NC Promise School. Dr. Cummings explained the NC Promise Tuition Plan: “It is to offer reduced tuition rates to make obtaining a college degree more attainable.” For low-income students.
- He discussed the demographics of the student population.
- Dr. Cummings highlighted key initiatives, programs, and services offered at UNC-Pembroke.
- He discussed the UNCP budget and future projects on campus. Discussed a pool of providers that may be coming to North Carolina.
- Discussed Alumni students' successes.
- Dr. Cummings concluded his presentation by acknowledging and remembering the legacy of the late Dr. Joseph (Joey) Bell. He noted that Dr. Joseph Bell lived his life serving mankind, and so did his two brothers. It was pointed out that Dr. Cummings and Mr. Ronnie Bell served on the Commission for approximately ten years to establish the North Carolina American Indian Health Board.
- In conclusion, Dr. Cummings noted that it was a pleasure to host the meeting and thanked everyone for coming to UNC-Pembroke, North Carolina.

No handout or copy of the UNC-Pembroke PowerPoint presentation was provided.

### **SWEARING IN CEREMONY – NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS**

Mr. Greg Richardson, Executive Director, welcomed and introduced the new and returning Members of the Commission.

Members were invited to take their place at the front of the room as their names were called out, in preparation for the swearing-in ceremony.

Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, welcomed and introduced the Honorable James Gregory Bell, Superior Court Judge, Judicial District 16B, for Robeson County, NC.

The Honorable James Gregory Bell, Superior Court Judge for Robeson County, gave a brief remark and presided over the swearing-in ceremony.

The following Commission members were sworn into office, and the Oath of Office was presented by the Honorable James Gregory Bell, Superior Court Judge.

#### **New Member:**

- Ed Simermeyer, representing the Coharie Tribe
- Tina Dicke, representing the Cumberland County Association for Indian People
- Amanda Jacobs Ballard, representing the Guilford Native American Association.
- Ed Livingston, representing the Meherrin Indian Tribe.

**Returning Members:**

- Alfred Richardson, representing the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe
- Vernanda (Vee) Oxendine, representing the Lumbee Tribe of NC
- Nadine Patrick, representing the Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe, was late. Mrs. Patrick was not present at the swearing-in ceremony.

**Returning State Official:**

- Gerald Goolsby, representing the President Pro Tempore of the NC General Assembly Appointee

Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, and Mr. Greg Richardson thanked The Honorable James Gregory Bell for presiding over the swearing-in ceremony.

The Executive Director noted that Mrs. Nadine Patrick was not present at the swearing-in ceremony and would need to take the Oath of Office in Columbus County, NC, before the next Commission meeting.

Photo Session for New and Returning Members.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS, 2025-2026:**

**NOMINATION OF ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, announced that there were two Commission officers up for election, and they are:

- Vice Chair, and Secretary/ Treasurer.

**Nomination for Vice Chair:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, opened the floor for nomination.

- Commissioner Elton Ray Jacobs made a motion to nominate Mrs. Dorothy Yates. Commissioner Amanda Ballard seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Commissioner Harrison Jones made a motion to nominate Mr. Craig McMillian. Commissioner Vernanda (Vee) Oxendine seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, asked if there were any other nominations for the office of Vice Chair. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to close the floor for nominations.
- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby made a motion to close the nomination for Vice Chair. Commissioner Larece Hunt seconded the motion. Motion carried with no objection from the membership.

The nominees for Vice Chair are listed as follows:

- Mrs. Dorothy Yates and Mr. Craig McMillian

The voting was conducted by secret ballots.

- It was noted that two members were attending virtually. They informed the staff of their secret ballot.
- It was noted that the votes would be counted by one Commission member and one staff member.



- Mrs. Dorothy Stewart Yates was elected as Vice Chair, by secret ballot, with 16 votes were “For” and nine votes were “Against”.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, announced that Mrs. Dorothy Yates has been elected as Vice Chair of the Commission.

**Nomination of Secretary/ Treasurer:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, opened the floor for the nomination for the office of Secretary/ Treasurer.

- Commissioner Danny Bell made a motion to nominate Mrs. Nadine Patrick. Commissioner Larece Hunt seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, asked if there were any other nominations for the office of Secretary/ Treasurer. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to close the floor for nominations.
- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby made a motion to close the nomination for Secretary/ Treasurer. Commissioner Alfred Richardson seconded the motion. Motion carried with no objection from the membership.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, announced that Mrs. Nadine Patrick's nomination was accepted by acclamation as Secretary/ Treasurer of the Commission.

**Nomination of Parliamentarian** (not listed on the agenda): Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, opened the floor for the nomination of Parliamentarian.

- Commissioner Larece Hunt made a motion to nominate Mr. Gerald Goolsby. Commissioner Alfred Richardson seconded the motion. Motion carried with no objection from the membership.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, announced that Mr. Gerald Goolsby's nomination was accepted by acclamation as Parliamentarian of the Commission.

**Greetings and Remarks from Chairman Bryant:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, thanked the Commission Members, guests, and staff for attending the Commission meeting. He also thanked Dr. Robin Cummings, Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, for hosting this meeting. Chair Bryant gave a brief overview of his expectations and goals for the Commission. It was noted that Members must fulfill their leadership duties with a high degree of responsibility and accountability. Members must be in attendance for each Committee assignment they have signed up to.

**Information and Discussion:** (Not listed on the agenda)

The following topics were discussed:

**Rules, Regulations, and Structure:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, requested that Mr. Mark Teague, Attorney, North Carolina Department of Justice (NC DOJ), provide a brief presentation on the rules and regulations governing the Commission Board.

Mr. Teague, read the General Statutes Chapter 143B, 143-B-405, and 143B-406. The following was discussed:

- It was noted that the Commission was set up to be an advocacy agency for the American Indian community of North Carolina. The structure through which the Commission operates is defined by the purposes and duties outlined in the General Statutes.



- The Commission was transferred to the Department of Administration (DOA) about fifty years ago. This was termed as Type 2 transfer. Mr. Teague provided a brief overview of the background history.
- The Department of Administration is responsible for the administrative supervision of all the functions of each Advocacy Division. The management functions are defined in the general statutes.
- The Department of Administration (DOA) handles all the fiscal affairs for the Commission mission itself. It supervises the Commission staff.
- The Commission must operate under the state procurement laws and rules handled by the Department of Construction. Goods or services are handled in accordance with the state laws.

No handout was submitted.

**Land and Trust:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, requested clarification on the Land and Trust matter. Mr. Teague referred to GS 143B-405 and 406. Discussion ensued as follows:

- It was noted that the Department of Administration, the Division of Indian Affairs, is not set up to be a land management agency.
- The tribal communities need to find the goals regarding land and trust. Economic development, which involves using tribal lands to benefit communities, establishes a specific list of goals for achievement. The achievement can serve as a starting point to return to the General Assembly to obtain new legislation passed for Land and Trust.
- Discussion ensued on Delegation of Authority and role of the Department of Administration for Land and Trust. Mr. Mark Teague noted that the General Statutes state that the Commission has a duty to act as a trustee for any interest in real property that may be transferred to the Commission for the benefit of a state-recognized tribe, in accordance with the Trust agreement approved by the Commission. It was noted that the Commission has not adopted any formal rules and regulations. Discussion ensued. Chair Bryant thanked Mr. Teague for the information on Land and Trust. No action was taken.

No handout was submitted.

**Gifts from Community- Ethics Regulation:** Mr. Greg Richardson noted that the Department of Administration is currently reaching out to the Ethics Commission regarding questions that were raised by staff on gift items received about religious freedoms (such as gift received in recognition of being honored for service, such as eagle feathers, bolos, and other special items).

No handout was submitted.

**Grant Opportunity:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, discussed the Grant Opportunity. Mr. McMillian, Vice-Chair, discussed tribal consultation and questioned how priorities are determined.



- It was noted that the Department of Administration is part of the governor's cabinet, and the Governor and his team direct the policy. DOA sets its policy within the framework for all the Divisions.
- Grant application is done by the Division staff, which goes in the approval flow to the Deputy Secretary and Chief Fiscal Officer for review and approval.
- Also discussed was NCDHHS federal funding: Dr. Porsche Pope, Director, Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, NCDHHS (Designee for Deputy Secretary Farrington) clarified the process that the state is working on the application for rural health transformation. It was noted that Deputy Secretary Farrington is leading this project. A website is available for individuals, and the community can provide input into this plan. The plan is due to the Federal government in November 2025. The funding will be awarded in December 2025. The grant will help support rural hospitals.
- It was noted that NCDHHS can implement services to bridge the gap due to the cuts to Medicaid. The input provided by the communities on the website will be included in the grant application.
- In conclusion, it was noted that NCDHHS is also looking at innovative ways to bring additional services to rural hospitals, behavioral health, and substance abuse treatment.

No handout was submitted.

### **LUNCH BREAK**

Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, announced lunch break at noon. Commissioner Ed. Simermeyer blessed the food. The meeting was reconvened at 1:00 pm.

### **BUSINESS ITEMS:**

#### **2025-2026 Committee Appointments and Discussion:**

**List of Chairs for Committee Assignments:** Chair Bryant announced chairs for each of the Committees as follows:

Harrison Jones – AI Housing Committee

Tony Hayes – Legislative Committee

Craig McMillian – Economic Development and Employment Committee

Michael (Mike) Lambert – Education Committee, Sub-Committee AI Child Welfare

Larece Hunt – State and Federal Recognition Committee

Danny Bell – AI Culture and Religion Committee

Greg Bryant – AI Health Committee and Victim Services

Greg Bryant – Executive Committee

It was announced that Members in each Committee have thirty days (30) to submit an email to Mr. Greg Bryant and Mr. Greg Richardson if they wish to switch committees.

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

The highlights are as follows:

- Welcomed new and returning Commission Members.





- Introduction of Commission staff to new members.
- State budget updates.
- Termination of USDA Grant Funding.
- Respiratory Vaccination Project (pass-through funding) and Tobacco Survey Project, reinstated.
- USDOL WIOA Grant Award to the NC Commission of Indian Affairs – It was noted that the NC Department of Justice/ Attorney General's office issued an advisory letter, indicating that the Commission does not have the statutory authority to administer the WIOA program in the State of Virginia. The copy of the letter was submitted in the Board packet.
- WIOA Program still has funding, and the Commission still serves the tribes.
- New Section 8 Housing Program Software. The new software will be implemented in October 2025.
- Family Violence Program and Service Act (FVPSA) purchasers have had challenges with processing payments. Purchases are tied to grants and do have limitations. The grant was funded with the purchases, but the process and the purchases were not aligned.
- Gift Items are being discussed with State Ethics by the Department of Administration and General Counsel.
- Mr. Greg Richardson urged members to stand in unity, with other state officials and the Department of Administration, in good spirits and respect for the law. All disagreements can be resolved amicably.
- Haliwa Saponi, Vital Records, Birth certificates, and Tribal ID Cards were discussed.
- New DMV Driver's license, members need to request that their race be included. (example AI/tribe). A copy of the letter addressed to Deputy Secretary Farrington of NCDHHS was included in the Board packet.

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

#### **COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS**

- Commissioner Craig McMillian, Vice Chair, asked clarifying questions on the FVPSA purchases and the WIOA Virginia grant funding.
- It was noted that FVPSA purchases were funded with the grant. The processes and purchases were not aligned.
- It was noted that the WIOA Virginia grant is about the statutory authority under which the Division can operate a program. Still, the program cannot cross state lines to operate in another state.

#### **Executive Director Report (Continued)**

##### **Action Item #1:**

**National Congress of American Indian (NCAI) Conference:** Mr. Greg Richardson discussed the following:



- The first action was taken in September 2023. The decision at the time was to utilize the funding awarded to the Commission from the sale of the NC Indian Culture Center property in Robeson County.
- In 2024, the Commission decided to support several Commission members to go to the NCAI conference. The action was taken to allocate up to \$900 for registration expenses for members attending the conference.
- June 2025, registration was \$500. It was noted that few members attended the summer conference.
- The NCAI Fall Conference, 2025, in Seattle, Washington, November 16-November 21, 2025. The registration deadline is mid-October 2025. It was noted that this conference serves as a national platform to address and advocate for North Carolina's state-recognized Indian tribes and communities.
- Members asked clarifying questions regarding the balance of funds available. It was noted that the money is limited, but up to five or six members could attend.
- Mr. Greg Richardson recommended the above information as an action Item, since staff need to prepare a budget authorization (BDA) for the registration fee for Members to attend. The DOA Executive management must approve the BDA before members can register.
- It was noted that members need to submit their names to Mr. Greg Richardson for approval. Also, note that some members will pay their own registration fee, or tribes will pay; in this case, it should not be double dipped for registration.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Gerald Goolsby moved to approve the registration fee for the Fall NCAI Conference, to be held in Seattle, Washington. Commissioner Vee Oxendine seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any objection to the motion. None was noted. The motion was approved.

**Action Item #2:**

Mr. Greg Richardson made a recommendation to approve the Executive Director's Report.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Craig McMillian, Vice Chair, moved to approve the Executive Director's Report. Commissioner Larece Hunt seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any objection to the motion. None was noted. The motion was approved.

**Other Item:**

Mr. Greg Richardson introduced Mr. John Simermeyer, an attorney, to the US Senate. Mr. John Simermeyer made a brief remark about his job at the US Senate in Washington, DC. He noted that he is here at the meeting to support his dad, Mr. Ed. Simermeyer, and Ms. Lenora Locklear, both Members of the Coharie Tribe.

**2025 Cashwell Award Ceremony:** A video presentation of the 2025 Cashwell Award Ceremony, held on August 26, 2025, was shown.

Mr. Greg Richardson, Executive Director of the NC Commission of Indian Affairs, received the 2025 Cashwell Award for completing 45 years of public service to the State of North Carolina.



## **COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS (Action Items Only)**

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

- Commissioner Elton Ray Jacobs requested that the four motions be sent back to the Committee. He stated that the motions relate to personnel matters (employment position classification) and that it is not a matter for the Board to intervene with the Department of Administration.
- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby, Parliamentarian, noted that it is inappropriate to send the four motions back to the Committee before it can be presented to the full Board. He reiterated that the motions need to be given and that appropriate action can be taken.

Mr. McMillian, Committee Chair, presented the action items from July 16, 2025, Economic Development and Employment Training Committee meeting.

The handout of the action item was provided in the Board packet. It is on file at the Commission.

### **ACTION ITEM #1**

That the Commission authorize the Chairman of the Commission to send a letter on behalf of the Economic Development & Employment Training Committee to ensure that new program year WIOA funding remains with NCCIA and that the NCCIA WIOA program is administered in the Monacan, Mattaponi, and Pamunkey tribes as designated.

- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, noted that the recommendation is from the Committee; it does not need a second. The chair asked if a discussion was needed.
- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby, Parliamentarian, noted that they had already had a discussion earlier. He recommended Substitute Motion. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Lambert discussed the recommendation brought before the Board; a motion was made to withdraw.
- Mr. McMillian, Committee Chair, noted that the funds were withdrawn after the Committee meeting. As discussed, this morning, to administer the funds, a legislative change is required. Commissioner Gerald Goolsby, Parliamentarian, noted that the Commission can send it back to the Committee or vote it down.
- Mr. McMillian, Committee Chair, noted that this is a two-part motion.
- Part#1: To send a letter on behalf of the Economic Development & Employment Training Committee to ensure that new program year WIOA funding remains with NCCIA.
- Part#2: The NCCIA WIOA program is administered in the Monacan, Mattaponi, and Pamunkey tribes as designated.

### **MOTION #1:**

- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby, Parliamentarian, noted that the motion was made as one motion. He made a motion to create a substitute motion, only to consider the programs funded in North Carolina (part 1), and then vote down the second half of the motion regarding the Virginia funding (part 2). Commissioner Edward Livingston seconded the motion. The Chair asked if there was any objection to the motion. None noted.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, asked members to say “Aye” if they were in favor of the motion. With the Ayes being the majority. The motion was carried.



## **ACTION ITEM #2**

That the Commission authorize the Chairman of the Commission to send a letter on behalf of the Economic Development & Employment Training (EDET) Committee to confirm support for NCCIA's role in administering the Scholar Path Talent Acquisition initiatives, ensuring implementation can proceed consistent with legislative intent and creating a statewide workforce pipeline.

## **COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

- Commission members asked clarifying questions on the funding amount. Mr. McMillian, Committee Chair, noted \$ 5 million. He added that the funding is not approved. He is requesting a letter of support. It was suggested that this issue needs to be added to the legislative agenda.
- Mr. Greg Richardson requested guidance from the Commission on whether the funding is awarded. Mr. Greg Bryant noted that at this moment, the EDET Committee is requesting a letter of support.

## **MOTION #2**

- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, noted that the recommendation from the Committee does not need a second.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, asked members to say "Aye" if they were in favor of the motion. With the Ayes being the majority. The motion was carried.

## **ACTION ITEM #3**

That the Commission approve the reclassification of the Deputy Director position from exempt to non-exempt status, and that this recommendation be formally forwarded to the Department of Administration (DOA) for administrative action.

## **COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

- Discussion ensued. Mr. Mark Teague, Attorney, Department of Justice, noted that this is a decision of the Department of Administration.
- Mr. McMillian, Committee Chair, noted that the Deputy Director position needs to be reclassified from exempt to non-exempt status, a job description and years of service need to be included in this request. He added that this position needs to be aligned with other non-exempt, similar-type positions.
- It was noted that most of the Deputy Director positions are exempt. This position serves the pleasure of the Governor. Examples were provided. Exempt versus Non-Exempt positions were explained. It was noted that state employees in leadership roles are in exempt positions. Discussion ensued.

## **MOTION #3**

- Commissioner Al Richardson noted that this is a personnel matter. The Commission Board does not need to debate this personnel matter at this meeting (a public setting). He suggested tabling the motion and discussing it at a separate meeting. Discussion ensued.



#### **SUBSTITUTE MOTION:**

- Commissioner Michael Lambert made a motion to table recommendation #3 from the EDET Committee regarding the reclassification of the Deputy Director position and send it back to the Committee. Commissioner Gerald Goolsby seconded the motion. Motion carried with no objection from the membership.

#### **ACTION ITEM #4**

That the Commission's Economic Development & Employment Training Committee (EDET), along with all other Commission committees, be authorized to meet with all North Carolina Departments and hold yearly consultation meetings.

#### **MOTION #4**

- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, noted that the recommendation from the Committee does not need a second. The chair asked if there needed to be a discussion.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, asked members to say "Aye" if they were in favor of the motion. With the Ayes being the majority. The motion was carried.

A handout of the Action Item, Economic Development, and Employment and Training Committee Meeting minutes, dated July 16, 2025, was included in the Board packet. It is on file at the Commission.

#### **American Indian Housing: No Report**

#### **American Indian Education:**

- Ms. Dorothy Yates, Committee Chair, followed up on the motion from the previous American Indian Education meeting regarding having representation at the state Social Studies Conference.
- It was noted that Ms. Yates contacted the Director in charge of the conference. He has agreed to open it up to any recognized tribes and organizations to present a proposal for the conference workshop. The due date to submit is December 1, 2025.
- Committee Chair Yates requested the newly elected chair of the Education Committee to follow up and contact the representative of the Social Studies Conference. The cost for the table at the conference is \$567. The conference will take place on February 26-27, 2026, at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC.
- It was noted that the new Committee Chair needs to contact the tribes and organizations for representation.
- Committee Chair Yates noted that she also serves on the Board of the State Advisory Council of Indian Education (SACIE) and provided a brief update.

No handout was provided.

#### **American Indian Child Welfare Sub-Committee**

Ms. Laury Chavis, Program Director for the American Indian Child Welfare Program, provided a brief update on the Indian Child Welfare Gathering Planning Committee. The Indian Child Welfare Gathering will take place on February 19, 2026, at Campbell University. Ms. Chavis



requested that each tribe in the urban Indian organization appoint a direct contact for Indian Child Welfare.

The American Indian Child Welfare Program handout was provided in the Board packet. It is on file at the Commission.

### **State and Federal Recognition**

Mr. Larece Hunt, Committee Chair, gave a brief overview of the tribal recognition process. It was noted that Chief Brian Harris sent an email informing him that the Catawba Nation is pursuing state recognition through the General Assembly. The Catawba Nation is requesting a letter of support.

It was noted that the Recognition Committee has received two letters of intent. One from New River Catawba, the Committee has not heard from them since February, and the other from the Feluda American Indian Tribe. The certified letter came back unopened. Both letters are placed in an inactive file. It was noted that Members need to read the quarterly report from Mr. Elk Richardson, Manager of the State (Tribal) Recognition Program.

No handout was submitted.

### **MOTION:**

- Mr. Larece Hunt, Committee Chair, made a recommendation requesting a letter of support to the Governor, Josh Stein, for federal recognition of the Lumbee Tribe and the Haliwa Saponi Tribe.
- Commissioner Gerald Goolsby, Parliamentarian, asked if it was coming from the Committee.
- Committee Chair Hunt noted that the Recognition Committee did not meet.
- Commissioner Craig McMillian, Vice Chair, seconded the motion.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, asked if there needed to be a discussion.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, asked members to say “Aye” if they were in favor of the motion. With the Ayes being the majority. The motion was carried.

**Veterans Affairs Sub-Committee** – No report.

**Legislative Committee** – No report

**Legislative Agenda Discussion 2025-2026** – No report

**American Indian Culture and Religion Committee:** Mr. Danny Bell, Committee Chair, presented an overview of the meeting minutes of July 13, 2025. The handout of July 13, 2025, meeting minutes was included in the Board packet for members' review.

### **ACTION #1:**

Mr. Danny Bell, Committee Chair, recommends the establishment of a joint advisory committee between the NC Commission of Indian Affairs and the Office of State Archaeology regarding American Indian archaeological activities and material.



#### **ACTION #2:**

Mr. Danny Bell, Committee Chair, recommends that the NC Commission of Indian Affairs be recognized as the appropriate Guardian of American Indian Archaeological material held in North Carolina.

#### **ACTION #3:**

Mr. Danny Bell, Committee Chair, made a recommendation to request the Secretary of the Department of Administration and the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources to formally agree on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a guardianship, and also a joint advisory committee on behalf of the Commission of Indian Affairs, and the Office of State Archaeology to discuss and bring information to us and to the public about American Indian Archaeology, North Carolina.

#### **COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

- Members asked for clarification on guardianship, whether it means bones and artifacts. Mr. Bell, Committee Chair, responded no, and noted that it means the Commission can ask questions on any matter if the entity has a formal MOU. Mr. Bell, Committee Chair, provided various examples. Discussion ensued.
- Commissioner Lambert raised concerns about the term guardianship. He noted that the word implies ownership and control over. He said that the Committee needs to be more specific in the wording.
- Mr. Bell, Committee Chair, noted that guardianship means the ability to look at the archaeological material as things arise.

#### **MOTION:**

- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, noted that the recommendation from the Committee does not need a second. The chair asked if there needed to be a discussion.
- Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, asked members to say “Aye” if they were in favor of the motion. With the Ayes being the majority. The motion was carried.

No handout of the action items was submitted.

**American Indian Health Committee:** Mr. Greg Bryant, Committee Chair, provided a brief comment on grants from NC DHHS. Dr. Portia Pope, NC DHHS, provided an update earlier.

No handout was submitted.

**American Indian License Plate:** (Not on the agenda)

Mr. Greg Bryant, Chair, requested members to support the American Indian License Plate. He noted that the proceeds of the purchase of these license plates go towards the scholarships of the students. He urged members to support this cause.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**FLOWER FUND REPORT:** Commissioner Nadine Patrick, Secretary/ Treasurer, presented this item. The following was discussed:



- Current balance in the Flower Fund: \$490.49 as of the August 2025 statement.
- Members were informed that the annual payment per member is \$24. Payments can be made via Credit Card, Check, Cash, or Cash App. Members need to contact her directly.
- Commissioner Patrick 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 Alfred Richardson made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Gerald Goolsby seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- The meeting adjourned at 2:58 pm.
- The next Commission meeting is scheduled for December 5, 2025. Location TBD.

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 December 5, 2025*

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





# N.C. COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

## ANNUAL MEETING

**James A. Thomas Hall**

**Event Room 225**

University of North Carolina, Pembroke

1 University Road

Pembroke, North Carolina 28372

**September 5, 2025**

**10:00 am – 3:00 pm**

**DRAFT AGENDA**

<b>Opening Session</b>	<b>10:00 am – 10:20 am</b>
Welcome, Call to Order	Greg Bryant, Chairman
Invocation Acknowledgment of Fallen Warriors - This Quarter	Dr. Michael Lambert, Commission Member
Pledge of Allegiance	Gerald Goolsby, Commission Member
Roll Call and Adoption of Agenda (Please Say - Present and Agree)	Daphne Pinto, Administrative Assistant
Reading of Ethics Statement	Gregory Richardson, Executive Director
Presentation and Approval of June 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes	Chairman Bryant
<b>Memorial Acknowledgment From Governor Josh Stein In Honor of the Late Dr. Joseph Bell</b>	Greg Bryant, Chairman Gregory Richardson, Executive Director
<b>Greetings and Welcoming Remarks:</b>	<b>10:20 am – 10:40 am</b>
<b>Mr. John Lowery, Chairman Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina</b>  <b>Dr. Robin Cummings, Chancellor University of North Carolina, Pembroke</b>	
<b>Swearing-in Ceremony</b>	<b>10:40 am - 11:00 am</b>
Welcome and Introduction New and Returning Members of the Commission Chairman Bryant	

<p><b>Administration of the Oath of Office</b></p> <p><b>The Honorable James Gregory Bell</b>  Superior Court Judge  Judicial District 16B  Robeson, County, North Carolina</p> <p><b>Presiding</b></p>	
<p><b>New Members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ed Simermeyer's</b>, Representing the Coharie Tribe. (Replacing Isabell Freeman Elliott)</li> <li>• <b>Tina Dicke</b>, Representing the Cumberland County Association for Indian People</li> <li>• <b>Amanda Jacobs Ballard</b>, Representing the Guilford Native American Association (Replacing Mr. DeVane Burnette Sr.)</li> <li>• <b>Ed Livingston</b>, Representing the Meherrin Indian Tribe (Replacing Mrs. Connie Mitchell)</li> </ul> <p><b>Returning members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Alfred Richardson</b>, Representing the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe of NC</li> <li>• <b>Vernanda (Vee) Oxendine</b>, Representing the Lumbee Tribe</li> <li>• <b>Nadine Patrick</b>, Representing the Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe</li> </ul> <p><b>Returning State Official:</b>  <b>Gerald Goolsby</b>, Representing the President Pro Tempore of the NC General Assembly Appointee</p>	
<b>Election of Officers</b>	<b>11:15 am – 11:30 am</b>
<b>Nomination for 2025-2026</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vice-Chair</li> <li>• Secretary/Treasurer</li> </ul>	Chairman Bryant
Greetings and Remarks from Chairman Bryant	<b>11:30 am – Noon</b>
<b>LUNCHEON</b>	<b>Noon - 1:00 pm</b>
Blessing the Food	Ed Simermeyer, Commission Member
<b>Business Items:</b>	<b>1:00 pm – 1:20 pm</b>
<b>2025-2026 Committee Appointments and Discussion</b>	Chairman Bryant

<b>Executive Director's Report</b> Staff Quarterly Program Reports (Included in Meeting Packet by email)	Gregory Richardson, Executive Director
<b>Commission Committee Reports</b> <b>*Reports with action items only</b> <b>*Action Item - In writing</b>	<b>1:20 pm – 3:00 pm</b>
Economic Development & Employment Committee Environmental Justice Agriculture	Craig McMillian, Chair
American Indian Housing	Elton Ray Jacobs, Chair
American Indian Education American Indian Child Welfare Sub-Committee	Dorothy Yates, Chair
State and Federal Recognition Veterans Affairs Sub-Committee	Larece Hunt, Chair
Legislative Committee Legislative Agenda Discussion 2025-2026	Tony Hayes, Chair
American Indian Culture & Religion Committee	Danny Bell, Chair
American Indian Health Committee	Chairman Bryant
<b>Other Business Items</b>	
Flower Fund Report	Nadine Patrick, Secretary/ Treasurer, NC Commission of Indian Affairs
Items from Commission Members, Discussion, Announcements (Please be brief)	Chairman Bryant
Closing Prayer	Dorothy Yates, Commission Member
<b>Adjournment</b>	<b>3:00 pm</b>
Upcoming 2025 Commission Meetings: <b>Meeting Sponsors Requested</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday, December 5, 2025 – Campbell University</li> <li>• Wednesday, March 4-7, 2026, held in conjunction with the 2026 NC Indian Unity Conference, North Raleigh Hilton, Raleigh, NC</li> </ul> <p>Commission members are encouraged to review our new website at: <a href="https://www.doa.nc.gov/boards-commissions/commission-indian-affairs">https://www.doa.nc.gov/boards-commissions/commission-indian-affairs</a></p>	