

Catawba County Board of Health  
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**Catawba County Board of Health  
Minutes  
February 09, 2026**

The Catawba County Board of Health met on Monday, February 09, 2026, at 7:00 pm at Catawba County Public Health, 3070 11<sup>th</sup> Ave Dr. SE, Hickory, NC 28602.

**Members Present:** Dr. Bruce Carlton, Chair  
Ms. Rebecca McLeod, Vice-Chair  
Mr. Austin Allran, County Commissioner  
Dr. Hannah Glenn  
Ms. Susan Knowles  
Dr. Eugene Modlin  
Ms. Gina Powers  
Dr. Steven Sanderson  
Mr. Vidal Sipe  
Ms. Janice Tice  
Mr. Shad Walters

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff present:** Ms. Jennifer McCracken, Health Director  
Ms. Julie Byrd, Assistant Health Director  
Ms. Tammy Fickling, Case Manager – CMHRP/CMARC  
Ms. Melissa Kirkpatrick, Operations Administrator  
Ms. Chantae Lail, Medical Lab Manager/Preparedness Coordinator \*  
Ms. Jennifer Lindsay, Health Services Manager \*  
Ms. Dacy Shute, Community Engagement Specialist/PIO  
Mr. Jeremy Stockton, WIC Director  
Ms. Megen Thomas, Environmental Health Administrator \*  
Ms. Marianne Vogel, School Health Nursing Supervisor \*  
Ms. Debra A. Young, Administrative Assistant II

**Guest:** Ms. April Pilkeatan, ASU Intern

\*Attended via Zoom meeting

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Dr. Bruce Carlton, Chair, called the Catawba County Public Health Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He welcomed Board members, Public Health managers, staff, and guests.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES**

Dr. Bruce Carlton, Chair, stated that Board members received the meeting agenda and the Board minutes for December 08, 2025, in the Board packet that the Board members received via email. Dr. Carlton asked if there were any changes to the agenda or corrections to the prior meeting Minutes. There being none, Dr. Carlton motioned to accept the agenda and previous meeting

minutes as presented, and Mr. Vidal Sipe seconded the motion. The agenda and minutes were unanimously approved.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Dr. Carlton asked if anyone had presented to speak before the Board. Ms. Debra Young, Administrative Assistant II, stated that no one had presented to speak to the board this evening.

### **COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Austin Allran, County Commissioner, gave an update from the recent Board of Commissioners meeting, stating that there will be an approved budget by the end of June for 2026-2027. He welcomed three new managers to Catawba County Government: an Assistant County Manager, an Emergency Services Director, and a Budget Director. Commissioner Allran also stated that a new, revised unified development ordinance will be adopted in July. It will be more restrictive, mainly on new buildings and overall development in the County.

### **2025-2026 MID-YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT**

Ms. Melissa Kirkpatrick, Operations Administrator, provided the Board with a mid-year Financial Report stating that Public Health's budget is \$14,491,455 (revised) at the second quarter/mid-year mark.

#### *Notable points*

Revenues and expenses should be at or near 50 percent. Revenues are tracking at 33.7 percent.

County Share, which is the balancing fund between all outside sources of revenue and expenses, is currently tracking at 35 percent. County Share at the mid-year point for 2024-2025 was 23 percent, 2023-2024 was 30.1 percent, and 2022-2023 was 10.3 percent. County Share is always the last funding source that is utilized after all other sources are exhausted.

Environmental Health – at mid-year, fees are tracking at 46.3 percent.

#### *Expenses*

Expenses are currently tracking at 40.55 percent.

Mid-Year: \$5,876,570 (\$1,369,157 under budget for the second quarter)

#### *Expense Highlights*

- Computer replacement for Case Management programs

### **PROPOSED FY 2026-2027 PUBLIC HEALTH BUDGET / PROPOSED FY 2026-2027 OUTCOMES**

Ms. Melissa Kirkpatrick continued with an overview of the proposed FY 2026-2027 budget. Based on prior history and funding information from grants, County, State, and Federal sources, the FY 2026-2027 budget is projected. After the Board of Health's approval, it will go to the County Manager's Office and then to the Board of Commissioners for approval and final adoption. A full copy of the summary, the FY 2026-2027 proposed budget, and the presentation slides were previously emailed to the Board of Health as part of their monthly packet.

Ms. Kirkpatrick noted that the FY 2026-2027 budget request does not include potential pay increases or final health and dental insurance information at this time, and that State and Federal funding provided via Agreement Addenda is not finalized. Nor does it include requests made by the County Budget Office.

#### **Overall Summary of Budget**

- Total FY 2026-2027 budget request is \$14,347,657.
- The revenue contributors to this budget are as follows:
  - County: \$7,399,206 – 51.57%
  - State/Federal: \$1,885,284 – 13.14%
  - Fees/Medicaid: \$2,744,749 – 19.13%
  - Grants: \$190,134 – 1.33%
  - Other Revenue: \$2,128,284 – 14.83%
- The FY 2026-2027 budget request represents an increase of \$141,239 (1%) compared to the FY 2025-2026 approved budget.
- Increased County Share compared to the fiscal year 2025-2026 appropriation - \$244,832 (3%). If approved by the County, this number may be reduced by utilizing funds from the prior sale of the Home Health agency or other restricted dollars.
- Budget Highlights
  - General facility renovations
  - Fees
  - Contingency Funds
  - Continued technology replacements
  - Various other increases/decreases in operating costs throughout Public Health's budget.

Ms. Kirkpatrick stated that Catawba County has systems in place to evaluate and change Policies, salaries, and benefits to remain competitive with other employers. Ms. Kirkpatrick further noted that the overall budget also represents Catawba County Public Health's commitment to workforce development, staff training, and education for all employees. All Board of Health and Subcommittee members also receive training opportunities throughout the year. Allocations like these, as presented in the proposed budget, reflect the commitment of Catawba County and Public Health to recruit and retain the best workforce possible and to equip our employees with the knowledge and tools to deliver the best services to our residents.

The Major Budget Points and Program Area Highlights were reviewed.

Ms. Julie Byrd, Assistant Health Director, provided an overview of the proposed outcomes for Public Health for FY 2026-2027. Ms. Byrd stated that the outcomes have been submitted to the County Manager's Office, and minimal changes have been made. No new outcomes were added.

There being no further discussion, the Finance Subcommittee Chair, Dr. Bruce Carlton, stated that the subcommittee met on January 21, 2026, and reviewed the proposed Catawba County Public Health budget for fiscal year 2026-2027, based on the information presented this evening. Dr. Carlton asked if there were any additional questions before calling for a vote. Hearing no

additional questions or comments, Dr. Carlton recommended approving the proposed budget and outcomes for the fiscal year 2026-2027 as presented this evening and asked for all those in favor to say 'aye.' The recommendation was unanimously approved.

Dr. Carlton commended Catawba County Public Health staff for their presentations and information provided at the subcommittee and Board meeting this evening.

A full copy of the summary, FY 2026-2027 budget request, and presentation slides are attached to the minutes.

### **HEALTH DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Jennifer McCracken, Health Director, stated she had several updates to report for the Health Director's report.

- The Federal Immunization Schedule was updated for children in January 2026. The CDC now recommends vaccines for 11 diseases, down from 17. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) made its own recommendations, and the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) stated that NC's mandatory childhood vaccine requirements will not change and remain stricter than the recent federal revisions. NCDHHS's requirements align with the AAP.
- Respiratory virus season looks to be on its way out, as the data for the past few weeks has consistently decreased.
- The measles outbreak in Upstate South Carolina has continued, with around 920 cases identified since October 2025. The overwhelming majority of cases involve people who are not vaccinated or have an unknown vaccination status.
- There have now been 17 cases reported in North Carolina, most of which are linked back to the South Carolina outbreak.
  - The best protection against measles is the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. This vaccine provides long-lasting protection against all strains of measles.
- Catawba County Public Health's Epi Team has been meeting for nearly a year to prepare for potential measles cases.
  - Specifically, Public Health has:
    - Established ICS structure
    - Conducted a tabletop exercise with healthcare, education, early childhood, and emergency services partners
    - Had ongoing communications with
      - Health care providers
      - Public schools, private schools, and colleges/universities
      - Childcare centers, churches, and other places where there could be pockets of unvaccinated children
      - Social media
      - All Public Health staff
      - County leadership

- Prepared media releases and other communication pieces that can rapidly be deployed if there are cases
  - Monitoring of NCDHHS' measles dashboard
  - Monitoring NCEDSS and establishing clear lines of communication for local providers to report potential cases
  - Participating in preparatory calls with NCDHHS and other organizations to make plans and learn from counties in North and South Carolina that have already experienced cases
  - Coordination of phone calls and emails with NCDHHS and community partners
  - Prepared "go-kits" for testing and vaccination
  - Prepared isolation and quarantine guidance
  - Planned for staffing scenarios for testing, case investigation, contact tracing, and vaccinations
- Other updates: Medicaid payments return to higher levels; NC WIC launched food package customization in January; Catawba County WIC is expected to receive an increase in participation funding; the County network issues that were causing Public Health to be disconnected from state systems have been resolved, and the McGuire Radiological Exercise After Action Report (AAR) has been finished.

The Health Director's presentation slides are attached to the Minutes.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Dr. Bruce Carlton motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Susan Knowles seconded the motion. Dr. Carlton adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

The next Board of Health meeting will be on April 13, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer F. McCracken  
Secretary to the Board of Health  
Health Director

JFM: day

Approved by the Board of Health: April 13, 2026