

**Catawba County Board of Health  
Minutes  
October 13, 2025**

The Catawba County Board of Health met on Monday, October 13, 2025, at 7:00 pm at Catawba County Public Health, 3070 11<sup>th</sup> Ave Dr. SE, Hickory, NC 28602.

**Members Present:** Ms. Rebecca McLeod, Vice-Chair  
Mr. Austin Allran, County Commissioner  
Dr. Hannah Glenn  
Dr. Eugene Modlin  
Ms. Gina Powers  
Mr. Vidal Sipe

**Members Absent:** Dr. Bruce Carlton, Chair  
Ms. Susan Knowles  
Dr. Steven Sanderson  
Ms. Janice Tice  
Mr. Shad Walters

**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 Shumate, Community Engagement Specialist/Backup PIO  
Ms. Megen Thomas, Environmental Health Administrator\*  
Ms. Marianne Vogel, School Health Nursing Supervisor\*  
Ms. Elaine Yancey, Clinical Services Nurse Supervisor\*  
Ms. Debra A. Young, Administrative Assistant II

**Guest:** Mr. Paul Murray, Assistant County Manager

\*Attended via Zoom meeting

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Ms. Rebecca McLeod, Vice-Chair, called the Catawba County Public Health Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She welcomed Board members, Public Health managers, staff, and guests.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND MINUTES**

Ms. Rebecca McLeod, Vice-Chair, stated that Board members received the meeting agenda and the Board minutes for August 11, 2025, in the Board packet that the Board members received via email. Ms. McLeod asked if there were any changes to the Agenda or corrections to the prior meeting Minutes. There being none, Ms. McLeod 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**

Ms. McLeod 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 about the Schools Community Conversations, which are being held to share information on County-wide school facility needs and the choices being faced as a community. The community dates are:

**October 21 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

Cornerstone Church, 409 E Main St, Maiden

**October 22 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

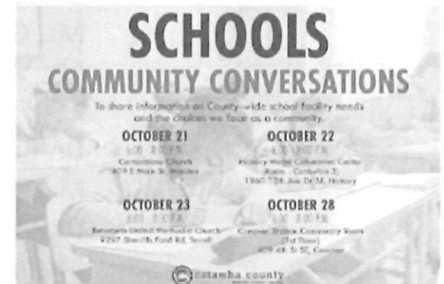
Hickory Metro Convention Center, Room - Catawba 3, 1960 13th Ave Dr SE, Hickory

**October 23 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

Rehobeth United Methodist Church, 9297 Sherrills Ford Rd, Terrell

**October 28 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

Conover Station Community Room (1st Floor), 409 4th St SE, Conover



### **WIC/FARMERS MARKET END OF SEASON UPDATE**

Ms. Julie Byrd, Assistant Health Director, updated the Board on the WIC program. WIC stands for Women, Infants & Children and is a special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children. It aims to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to the age of five who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement their diets, offering information on healthy eating, and referring them to healthcare services.

WIC began in Catawba County on February 1, 1977, and was named the Women's, Infants, and Children Project. At that time, only residents of Catawba County could qualify for nutritional aid. Now, you can live outside Catawba County and qualify for WIC.

Ms. Byrd continued with the update, stating that the state-assigned caseload for Catawba County for fiscal year 2024-25 was 3,513 participants per month. WIC currently serves an average of 3,730 participants monthly, which equals 106.2% of the state-assigned caseload.

Currently, there are 31 vendors in Catawba County, consisting of 26 corporate stores and 5 non-corporate stores. The WIC program paid vendors in Catawba County \$3,706,046 in fiscal year 2024-2025.

WIC continues to offer the Cash Value Benefit. These options include both fresh and frozen fruits & vegetables, as well as organic options if the participant chooses. There will be some changes

taking effect on November 1st to implement cost containment measures due to the rise in food costs. Participants will not be able to purchase organic foods in certain categories; however, this exclusion will not apply to fruits, vegetables, or infant foods.

Ms. Byrd further provided an update on the 2025 farmer's market season. This was the 13<sup>th</sup> season of the farmers' market, held at Catawba County Public Health, with an average of 162 customers attending each market. The market was held on Thursdays from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm from June through September. Based on data from the State, Catawba County finished 1<sup>st</sup> overall in the State for market voucher redemption.

The total volume of sales for the 2025 season, including WIC eFMNP vouchers, Bonus Bucks, and Double Bucks, SNAP/EBT, and personal debit cards, was \$20,304.

Ms. Byrd ended the presentation with an update regarding the Federal Government shutdown. She stated that it is currently still business as usual. The state is working with its federal partners to minimize disruptions. The WIC program is not yet funded for FY 2026, and the NC State WIC program has been utilizing every available lever to position itself as strongly as possible. States are implementing internal cost containment strategies to preserve funding for as long as possible, not knowing how long the shutdown will last.

The presentation is attached to the Minutes.

#### **2024-2025 YEAR-END BUDGET UPDATE**

Ms. Melissa Kirkpatrick, Operations Administrator, provided the end-of-fiscal-year financial information for 2024-2025.

The PowerPoint and financial spreadsheets are attached to these minutes, with the highlights being:

#### **Expenditures:**

- Ended the fiscal year at 83.4% expended
- Ended the fiscal year \$2,376,513 under budget for the FY
- Carryover COVID-19 response funding
- WIC and Environmental Health cubicle projects

#### **Revenues:**

- Catawba County is still finalizing revenues
- County Share and Fund Balance Appropriated will be utilized to equal expenses once all expenditures are paid
- Regional ARPA Funds \$5,678
- NACCHO grant received \$16,500
- REACH grant received \$58,915
- Additions to restricted funds \$287,460.81

- Restricted funds balance is \$2,092,423
- Home Health sale restricted balance \$2,648,286
  - Medical Records Scanning Project \$245,000

The 2024-2025 Year-end Budget Report and slides are attached to the Minutes.

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH DEBT SET-OFF**

Ms. Melissa Kirkpatrick, Operations Administrator, gave updated information on the Public Health Debt Setoff request. The presentation and account information were sent to the Board in their monthly Board packet and attached to the minutes.

Ms. Kirkpatrick stated that the timeframe of the 49 accounts included in this write-off request includes accounts from 2014, a minor at the time of service, or a deceased patient. The accounts can be written off when the account balance is less than \$50.00 on the account.

The Public Health Debt Setoff information is being brought to the Board of Health for approval, as previously stated. The Health Director requests that the Board of Health approve the Debt Setoff write-off in the amount of \$28,843.66.

After the presentation, Ms. Kirkpatrick fielded questions, and Ms. Rebecca McLeod, Vice-Chair, asked for a motion to approve the Public Health Debt Setoff write-off amount for 49 accounts as presented. Mr. Vidal Sipe so moved, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the Public Health Debt Setoff Write-off in the amount of \$28,843.66.

#### **PUBLIC HEALTH BAD DEBT WRITE OFF**

Ms. Melissa Kirkpatrick, Operations Administrator, continued with a Public Health Bad Debt Write-Off request. The presentation and account information were sent to the Board in their monthly Board packet and attached to the minutes.

Ms. Kirkpatrick stated that the list of uncollectible, outstanding client balances is prepared annually and presented to the Health Director and the Board of Health, as per Catawba County Public Health's Eligibility, Fee, and Billing Policy. Those balances approved by the Health Director and the Board of Health will be written off.

Debt is considered uncollectable when there has been no activity within the past twelve months and/or the account is not eligible for the NC Debt Setoff Program. Currently, 108 accounts have outstanding balances that meet the definition of uncollectible.

The Public Health Bad Debt Write-Off information is being brought to the Board of Health for approval, as previously stated. The Health Director requests that the Board of Health approve the bad debt write-off in the amount of \$14,745.17.

After the presentation, Ms. Kirkpatrick fielded questions, and Ms. Rebecca McLeod asked for a motion to approve the Public Health Bad Debt Write-Off amount for 108 accounts as presented.

Dr. Eugene Modlin so moved, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the Public Health Bad Debt Write-off in the amount of \$14,745.17.

#### **AMBETTER WRITE OFF**

Ms. Melissa Kirkpatrick, Operations Administrator, continued with the Ambetter Write-Off request. The presentation and account information were sent to the Board in their monthly Board packet and attached to the minutes.

Ambetter of North Carolina is an insurance company. Catawba County Public Health's in-network contract was fully executed with them in May of 2022; however, two of Public Health's providers were left off by Ambetter. Ambetter would not go back and revise claim dates, so claims were not effective until April 15, 2025. There were 14 accounts that Ambetter should have paid but did not. The claims total \$4,034.81.

The Ambetter Write-Off information is being brought to the Board of Health for approval, as previously stated. The Health Director requests that the Board of Health approve the Ambetter write-off in the amount of \$4,034.81.

After the presentation, Ms. Kirkpatrick and Ms. McCracken fielded questions, and Ms. Rebecca McLeod asked for a motion to approve the Ambetter Write-Off amount as presented. Mr. Vidal Sipe so moved, and the Board unanimously voted to approve the Ambetter Write-off in the amount of \$4,034.81.

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

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

- At the annual Fall Education Conference (FEC), the NC Public Health Association (NCPHA) announced state-level awards for public health work. Catawba County Public Health's (CCPH) Community Health Workers (CHWs) received a top award for improving child health by linking families to resources. Only three health departments in NC received this award.
- Also at the FEC, Public Health was the recipient of the Ann Wolfe child health grant, which will provide CCPH's Care Management team with \$8,000 to purchase Pack N Plays for parents who do not have a safe sleep environment for their infants.
- Catawba County was recently notified regarding a black tuxedo cat that tested positive for rabies in the Sherrills Ford area. The CCPH Communicable Disease Team discussed the next steps with anyone who may have come into contact with the cat.
- Catawba County Public Health, along with other County Departments and officials from other counties, participated in the bi-annual McGuire Nuclear Station's Exercise.
- We are entering into the traditional 'respiratory virus season' which peaks from December to March. NC has already reported a flu death for this year.
  - Flu and COVID shots and RSV vaccines for infants and the prenatal population will be available at CCPH

- Between January 2022 to September 2025, there have been 63 cases of invasive meningococcal disease reported in North Carolina. The most effective way to prevent meningococcal disease is through vaccination.
- Catawba County Public Health is continuing to monitor measles outbreaks, especially an outbreak in upstate South Carolina.
- With cuts to federal funding for Medicaid, NC is anticipating a significant shortfall in the amount of funds it will receive to provide Medicaid coverage to people throughout the state. To offset some of those shortfalls, the state began reducing Medicaid reimbursements to providers on October 1.
- The Addiction Medicine Summit will be held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 8:00-5:00 pm. Registration is now open. Flyers are available for Board Members who may wish to take one.

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

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **Health Director Annual Performance Evaluation**

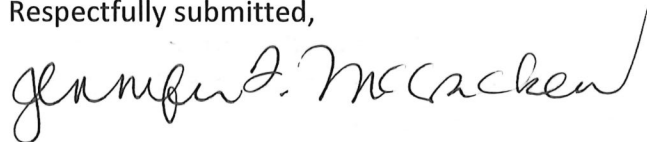
Ms. Rebecca McLeod, Vice-Chair, stated that Dr. Bruce Carlton, Board of Health Chair, met with Ms. Jennifer McCracken, Health Director, and Mr. Paul Murray, Assistant County Manager, for the Health Directors' Annual Performance Evaluation on September 29, 2025. All board members received a report from the Assistant County Manager. Ms. McCracken's job description and outcomes were reviewed and approved for the upcoming fiscal year.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Ms. Rebecca McLeod, Vice-Chair, motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Vidal Sipe seconded the motion. Ms. McLeod adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

The next Board of Health meeting will be on December 08, 2025, 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: December 08, 2025