SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2026
Time: 11:30 a.m.
Location: Training Room 103A
Harnett County Resource Center & Library
455 McKinney Parkway, Lillington

1. **Call to order** – *Chairman Duncan Jaggers*
2. **Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation** – *Vice Chairman Matt Nicol*
3. **Presentation of Legislative Priorities**
4. **Adjourn**

CONDUCT OF THE MARCH 31, 2026 MEETING

Live audio of the meeting will be streamed on the Harnett County Government's YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU7mTF6HTD65x_98EhAMeMg/featured.



Harnett
COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

2026

HARNETT COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Top Legislative Priorities

Economic Development

Assist with Efforts to Expand Natural Gas Capacity

Access to natural gas is a basic requirement for many businesses and industries. Despite population growth in portions of Harnett County, the absence of natural gas has prevented the commercial and industrial development that would normally accompany this growth. An example of this is the N.C. 87 corridor and the County-owned Western Harnett Innovation Park, which is well-located and has experienced substantial residential development over the last decade, but has missed out on commercial and industrial growth, partly due to a lack of natural gas availability. We ask for assistance in identifying opportunities to expand natural gas capacity throughout the county through public-private partnerships.

Assist County in Creation of Economic Development Sites, Buildings, and Industrial Parks

Harnett County is committed to the development and marketing of industrial parks to expand the County's economy and provide quality jobs for the county's citizens. The County is currently seeking additional properties in strategic locations for the purpose of developing sites to market for economic development purposes. While land is available in the county for economic development, additional amenities are necessary to make these sites attractive for industrial recruitment. We seek additional assistance in developing sites for economic development to include utilities such as high-speed Internet, natural gas, water and sewer, streets, power, and other necessary infrastructure. In addition, the development of speculative industrial buildings has become necessary for communities to compete for companies seeking a new location or expansion. We ask our State legislators to consider programs and funding mechanisms that can help our communities take the next step in developing our business parks to match the current business climate for how companies make location and expansion decisions, as approximately 90% of new and expanding companies are seeking an existing building.

Assist County in Expanding Broadband Access to Underserved Areas

Lack of access to high speed Broadband is a significant barrier to economic growth, and limits educational opportunities and outcomes for residents. Harnett County completed a Broadband Survey in 2019 and entered into a partnership with an ISP in 2020 to expand Broadband availability in Harnett County. Funding from the CARES Act allowed the County to begin actively expanding Broadband access, and American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding provides a significant opportunity for Harnett County to make considerable progress towards this priority by providing direct funding to the County as well as expanded grant programs through the State and Federal government. The State budget did provide some additional flexibility to allow the use of ARPA funds to partner with ISPs to expand Broadband in unserved areas, however we still do not feel State law provides sufficient flexibility for counties to take full advantage of these opportunities. Additionally, some of the County's incumbent ISPs have limited the County's ability to obtain funding through available grant programs. We request additional statutory flexibility to allow broader use of ARPA dollars to provide reliable high speed Internet to the county's residents at an affordable price, as well as fewer obstacles to the County's efforts to leverage grant opportunities to expand Broadband with less of a burden on County taxpayers.

Top Legislative Priorities

Education

Provide Additional Solutions to Assist with Public Education Low Wealth Capital Funding

Harnett County is among the fastest growing counties in North Carolina, and with that growth comes additional demand for public services including the education of students. The County's median home value is $246,200 (Source: U.S. Census Bureau), which does not generate enough tax revenue to pay for the services the home's occupants will need. Many new single-family homes are constructed, with most being built in north/northwest Harnett County. This will create a significant burden on our school system. We request assistance identifying a solution to help fund public education in the county.

Harnett Regional Jetport

Assist County with Expanding and Enhancing Harnett Regional Jetport

Harnett Regional Jetport (HRJ) currently ranks 9th in the State for jobs supported and 10th highest for economic output among General Aviation airports. The economic impact of HRJ is more than $147 million annually, according to the NCDOT Division of Aviation. Over the past decade, the County has made significant investments upgrading and improving existing infrastructure, but we need additional support to add the facilities that are necessary to meet the current level of service demand and to facilitate additional economic growth in Harnett County and the surrounding region. The North Carolina Statewide System Plan and the ongoing Airport Master Plan have identified a number of additional needs. Those include lengthening the runway from 5,005 to 5,500 feet and widening it from 75 to 100 feet; adding T-Hangars and Shelters, and Corporate Hangars, and replacing current fuel facilities. We ask for additional appropriations to help the County continue the progress currently being made at the Jetport to fully realize its potential as a critical economic engine for Harnett County.

Additional Legislative Priorities

Appropriate Full Funding for the Federal Impact Aid Program (Federal)

The Federal Impact Aid Program reimburses school districts for the loss of local tax revenue due to the presence of the Federal Government. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education and funding is approved each year by Congress through the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations Subcommittee bill. Because the Impact Aid Program is not fully funded (and hasn't been since 1969), funds are distributed using a needs-based funding formula, which results in Harnett County Schools receiving less funding per student than surrounding counties, and considerably less than the school system would receive were the program fully funded. In 2020, Harnett County Schools received $728,034.59 in Impact Aid Funding, but would have received $4,126,969.99 had the program been fully funded, a difference of nearly $3.4 million. We request that Congress fully fund the Impact Aid Program to address the impact of military-connected students on local school systems. The National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS) has also asked for increased appropriations for FY 2022, and additional cosponsors for H.R. 5255, the Advancing Toward Impact Aid Full Funding Act, which would provide a path to fully funding Basic Support and would also provide increases to Federal Property and Children with Disabilities payments. A similar bill in the U.S. Senate is also anticipated.

100% Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exclusion

The current 100% Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exclusion provides an exclusion on the first $45,000 in appraised valuation when calculating property taxes due on a home for a 100% Disabled Veteran. The Board of Commissioners would like to see consideration for changing the exclusion amount per the guidelines proposed in Senate Bill 148 titled the "deViere Disabled Veterans Act" of 2023. The language in Senate Bill 148 creates an exclusion of the first $100,000 of appraised value for a 100% disabled veteran' home. The bill language creates a hold harmless provision that would reimburse counties for lost revenue due to the exclusion's utilization by 100% disabled veterans. The board requests that the bill be considered for action out of the Senate Finance Committee.

Ensure Accurate County Assignment of Sales Tax for Delivered Goods (State)

Harnett County loses sales tax revenue due to vendors not properly designating the county location for delivery of goods. A significant portion of the County has zip codes which are shared with surrounding counties. The use of the five-digit zip code instead of the nine-digit zip code sometimes results in the wrong county being credited for taxes when the delivery destination is in Harnett County. This is particularly important when it comes to building materials being delivered to site for new construction and residents shopping online. Harnett County is working to educate homebuilders and residents about this issue, however we seek State assistance, which could include requiring vendors to use a central database maintained by the State, requiring use of the nine-digit zip code for reporting.

State Bill 382 Down Zoning Limits Repealed

The recently approved State Bill creates a law that greatly restricts local government discretion to amend local zoning ordinances. The law broadly defines “down-zoning” and provides that local governments cannot adopt a down-zoning without consent from all impacted owners. We seek the repeal of this new law in the 2026 legislative session.

Additional Legislative Priorities

Assist County with Economic Development Marketing Efforts (State/Federal)

Harnett County currently owns three industrial parks, which it is marketing for targeted business development, along with a number of privately owned sites across the county. The County works with EDPNC, the Research Triangle Regional Partnership, and others to increase awareness of these properties. The County has seen varied success in selling these properties for industrial and commercial use. We wish to make our legislators aware of Harnett County's economic development efforts and product, and ask for their continued assistance advocating for Harnett County and sharing information regarding the availability of funding, grants, and other resources to enhance our ongoing economic development marketing efforts.

Support Creation of Bypass around City of Dunn (State)

U.S. 421 is a major artery through Harnett County for commerce; however, travel slows considerably through Downtown Dunn, especially at certain times of the day. The construction of a bypass around Dunn that passes by Edgerton Industrial Park and the Food Lion Distribution Center would improve travel through this area and enhance the appeal for commercial and industrial development in this area. A bypass has been considered in the last several years and there is a project designation with NCDOT (# U-6052). We ask for assistance pushing this project forward as a priority for design and funding.

Provide Assistance to Modernize Rural Roads to Accommodate Farm Equipment (State/Federal)

Agriculture remains Harnett County's number one industry. Many of the County's roads, however, are not suited to accommodate modern agricultural equipment, creating backups and potentially leading to accidents. This issue has been exacerbated by the County's rapid population growth, which is leading to increased traffic on rural roads. We seek support from NCDOT to assist in modernizing these roads to better accommodate modern farm vehicles.

Lower NCDOT Road Takeover Threshold to 60-65% percent Buildout (State)

When a property is developed into a subdivision, the County requires the developer to build the roads to NCDOT specifications with the intent that NCDOT will assume maintenance of the roads soon after most of the building is done. As it stands, NCDOT requires that 75 percent of homes in a subdivision be occupied before the developer can petition to have the roads taken over. This sometimes results in the developer pulling out of the project before the roads can be taken over, which creates issues for homeowners in the subdivision. Harnett County Development Services requests that the threshold be lowered and changed to 60-65% buildout and that occupancy not be a requirement since this is not enforceable at the County level.

Expand Fire Prevention Grant Opportunities to include Counties (State & Federal)

Currently, State and Federal grant opportunities for fire prevention programs are available to fire departments, departments that provide rescue services, and local law enforcement agencies. The expansion of the grants program to include county fire marshals offices would allow for additional prevention programs to provide smoke detector installation in rural low income areas, purchase fire safety trailers/equipment and hold community-related fire prevention programs.

Additional Legislative Priorities

Voting Law Changes for Absentee and Provisional

Review current requirements for counting and submitting absentee ballots and provisional ballots to ensure that counts are submitted as quickly as possible. Remove the ability to use schools as voting locations.

Give School Systems Flexibility in Establishing their K-12 Calendars (State)

Allowing flexibility in establishing their K-12 calendars would give school systems the ability to align the K-12 calendar with local community colleges, which would provide more opportunities for high school students to take advantage of opportunities for higher education.

Increase Appropriation for ADFP Trust Fund (State)

The Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund provides payments to families for placing conservation easements on their property while still allowing the land to be used for agricultural and timber production. Due to limited funding for the program, projects have been turned down or have been only partially funded. Harnett County Soil & Water Conservation District requests increasing the annual appropriation to ADFP from $6 million to $10 million. The NCDA Farmland Preservation Office believes this appropriation will better equip ADFP based on statewide applications.

Preserve Federal and State Block Grants for County-Administered DSS Programs (State)

The Harnett County Department of Social Services seeks the preservation of Federal and State Block Grant Funding to allow DSS to administer programs considered to be vital to the community. The department also asks for continued funding to allow the administration of these programs and that shifting the responsibility for funding program administration to the County be avoided.

A Request for an Extension on OSBM Funding

Harnett County would like an extension on the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) grants for the Johnson Farm and the Detention Center Generator. In addition, we need to have a technical correction approved for the Johnson Farm grant to allow the funds to be used for other Parks and Recreation items.

Additional Funding

We ask the General Assembly to approve a budget that provides full funding for the Medicaid reimbursement for services that the County provides in the health department and Harnett Area Rural Transit System (HARTS). Provide adequate funding for the Guardianship and Adult Protection Services. Funding is needed for the Department of Social Services.

Our Vision

Harnett County is a unified, safe, healthy, and engaged community that is culturally vibrant, well-planned with a thriving economy and a high-quality educational system, in harmony with its environment and beautiful natural resources, and with strong leadership ensuring equitable services so that all citizens will prosper.

Our Mission

Harnett County will effectively and efficiently deliver high quality County services and public infrastructure with smart growth strategies and through a responsive Board and workforce who are committed to excellence and ensuring the public trust with dedication, leadership and governance.

Strategic Goals

- Superior Education
- Organizational Excellence
- Healthy & Safe Community
- Economic Strength
- Informed & Engaged Citizens

Information about how the County is pursuing its missions and goals is available in the County's Strategic Plan at **harnett.org/boc**



Harnett County Manager's Office
455 McKinney Parkway Lillington, NC 27546
(910) 893-7555
harnett.org