



NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE

Minutes
November 19, 2025 Board Meeting

The North Carolina Board of Funeral Service convened for a duly scheduled Board meeting on November 19, 2025, at the Board offices at 1033 Wade Avenue, Suite 108, Raleigh, NC 27605.

Present: Mr. Thomas Hilderbrand, President; Mr. Richard Hincer, Vice President; Ms. Le'Shekia Coleman, Secretary; Mr. Robert Nunnaley; Dr. Steven Lyons, Mr. Brian Sutphin, and Mr. Gary Overcash. Staff in attendance were Ms. Amy Acord Elston, Executive Director; Ms. Kaylan Krcelic, Administrative Assistant; Mr. Brett Lisenbee, Compliance Director; and Ms. Catherine Lee, General Counsel. Guests in attendance were Mr. Linwood Melvin, Licensee; Hasten Wall, Licensee; Tryphinia Wiseman, FDMANC; Adrianna Kelsey, FDMANC; Teshuna DuBose, FDMANC.

Mr. Hilderbrand convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and indicated that the meeting was in memory of Board member Dr. Kimberly Kelsey. He then recognized Mr. Hincer for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. He asked Dr. Lyons for the invocation. Following the invocation, Mr. Hilderbrand read the Statement of Ethics and asked if any Board members had any conflict or appearance of conflict of interest.

Mr. Hilderbrand recognized Ms. Coleman for the presentation of the minutes from the October 8, 2025 meeting. Ms. Coleman stated that staff had provided the minutes prior to the meeting for review and invited any changes or amendments. Mr. Hilderbrand invited a motion for approval of October 8, 2025, minutes.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hincer and a second by Mr. Overcash, the Board voted by roll call, except for Mr. Allen who was absent for this vote, to approve the October 8, 2025, minutes as presented.

Mr. Hilderbrand then asked Dr. Lyons to present the Disciplinary Committee report. Dr. Lyons stated that staff had provided the Disciplinary Committee report prior to the meeting for review and invited any questions or comments. No comments were offered. Mr. Hilderbrand then invited motions for approval of the Disciplinary Committee report.

Upon a motion by Dr. Lyons and a second by Mr. Overcash, the Board voted by roll call, except for Mr. Allen who was absent for this vote, to approve the Disciplinary Committee report with the following dispositions:

- Dismissals for Case Nos. C25-0072, C25-0095, C25-0096, C25-0098, C25-0101, C25-0102, C25-0103, C25-0107, C25-0108, 25-0110, C25-0114
- Issuance of Letter of Caution for Case Nos. M25-0029, M25-0039/M25-0040/M25-0041, M25-0042, M25-0043, M25-0044, M25-0045, M25-0046, M25-0047
- Notices of Hearing: M25-0050, M25-0051

Mr. Hilderbrand then recognized Ms. Acord Elston for summarizing the Finance and Personnel Committee report.

Finance and Personnel Committee Report

Ms. Acord Elston highlighted the report from the Finance and Personnel Committee based on the Committee report which follows. She noted that the Committee met on November 12, 2025, and reviewed the statement of net position and the statement of revenues and expenses for the period ending September 30, 2025.

Her summary was based upon the following committee report:

Mr. Hilderbrand then asked for an update on the revised Employee Handbook. Ms. Acord Elston and Ms. Lee provided a brief overview of the proposed changes. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Hilderbrand then asked for an update on the performance evaluations. Ms. Acord Elston and Mr. Lisenbee reported that the performance evaluations had been completed, and the process yielded valuable insights that will help streamline processes for staff.

Mr. Hilderbrand then asked Ms. Acord Elston to present the financials for the reporting period ending September 30, 2025.

Ms. Acord Elston then summarized the Statement of Net Position. She noted that the financials remained stable, with continued growth across various account balances. Current assets totaled \$3.1 million, an increase from \$2.4 million during the same reporting period in 2024. She further reported that total liabilities and net position stood at \$3.6 million, up from \$3.4 million in 2024.

The Committee then engaged in detailed discussion regarding the unrestricted fund balance and the IT enhancement fund. They explored the potential use of these funds to update or replace the existing database management system.

Ms. Acord Elston then reported that revenue collected for the current reporting period stands at 85.6%, compared to 87% during the same period in 2024. She noted that, based on the fiscal calendar, line items should be at approximately 75% at this point in the year. The Committee reviewed and discussed the line items that exceeded this benchmark. Ms. Acord Elston also pointed out that several line items were significantly below the 75% threshold. She concluded by noting that total operating expenses for the current reporting period were at 72.8%, which is 2.2% below the expected level.

The Committee then briefly discussed the proposed 2026 meeting schedule, including the possibility of increasing the number of online meetings and reducing the overall frequency of meetings.

Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Ms. Coleman, the Board voted by roll call, except for Mr. Allen who was absent for this vote, for approval of the financial reports for the period ending September 30, 2025.

Ms. Acord Elston indicated that the remainder of the Finance & Personnel Committee report would be discussed later in the meeting.

Mr. Hilderbrand then recognized Dr. Lyons for the Technology Committee Report.

Technology Committee Report

Ms. Acord Elston indicated that the Technology Committee met on November 18, 2025. Her summary was based on the following committee report:

Ms. Acord Elston presented the Lockbox feature offered by First Citizens Bank to the Committee, noting that the bank had previously given a presentation in May 2025 and was now bringing the option to the Committee for review. She reminded the Committee that the Lockbox service is an accounts receivable solution for preneed contract submission, improving the collection of preneed contracts and filing fees by reducing mail and processing times. Under this system, preneed contracts and related filing fees would be sent to a specific P.O. Box maintained by First Citizens Bank's outsourced lockbox provider, Deluxe Financial Services. The work would be processed at the site location corresponding to the P.O. Box, and deposits, batches, transactions, and remittance documents would be made available through the First Citizens Bank Receivables online system. To ensure timely posting, First Citizens Bank would receive a daily electronic cash letter, enabling lockbox deposits to be credited to client accounts with next business day availability. This process would also ensure compliance with the 24-hour deposit requirement established under the Daily Deposit Act, thereby meeting regulatory standards while maintaining efficiency in handling preneed contract submissions.

The Committee also discussed the option of building a portal for preneed contract submission rather than using the Lockbox feature. Staff indicated that building a preneed portal for online contract submission was a long-term goal; however, in the interim, utilizing the Lockbox feature would provide immediate benefits by freeing up staff time.

Mr. Hilderbrand indicated that it was time to hold the public hearing for Rulemaking and that a motion would be made regarding the Technology Committee's recommendation after the public hearing.

Public Hearing

At 10:00am, the Board held a public hearing for the proposed amendment of the following rules through permanent rulemaking:

- 21 NCAC 34A .0201 (Fees and Other Payments)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0103 (Authorized Practice: Supervision)

- 21 NCAC 34B .0105 (Funeral Director Trainee Application Form)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0106 (Embalmer Trainee Application Form)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0107 (FSL Trainee Application Form)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0120 (Trainee Final Affidavits)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0211 (National Board Certificate)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0310 (Practice of Funeral Service or Funeral Directing Not as an Owner, Employee, or Agent of a Licensed Funeral Establishment)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0313 (Procedures for Provisional Licensure)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0408 (Continuing Education Program)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0502 (Application Form and Equivalent Examinations for Reciprocal License)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0608 (Application Form for Funeral Establishment Permit and Branch Establishment Permit)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0610 (Application Form for Funeral Establishment Permit and Branch Establishment Permit)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0616 (Body Identification Tags)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0617 (Practicing During Disasters)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0801 (Definitions)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0802 (Initial Transporter Permit Application Form)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0803 (Transporter Permit Renewal Application Form)
- 21 NCAC 34D .0305 (Transfer of Trust Funds to Insurance Funded Product)

The Board also received information and comments regarding the proposed repeal of the following rules:

- 21 NCAC 34A .0122 (Character Affidavit) (repeal)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0618 (Practicing During Emergencies) (repeal)
- 21 NCAC 34C .0101 (Election to Crematory Authority) (repeal)

The Board also received information and comments regarding the proposed adoption of the following rules:

- 21 NCAC 34B .0807 (Initial Transportation Service Permit Application Form)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0808 (Transportation Service Permit Renewal Application Form)
- 21 NCAC 34D .0305 (Transfer of Trust Funds to Insurance Funded Product)

Public comment was received, and the hearing was concluded at 10:30am.

Mr. Hilderbrand then recognized Dr. Lyons for the Technology Committee's recommendation for the Lockbox feature.

Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Dr. Lyons, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the Lockbox feature with a 3-month trial period, and with the understanding that staff would continue working toward the long-term goal of building a portal for online preneed contract submission.

The Board staff then honored the late **Dr. Kimberly D. Kelsey**, for her distinguished service with the NC Board of Funeral Service, having completed a full term after appointment by Governor Roy Cooper. Known for her unwavering commitment to dignity, respect, and fairness, Dr. Kelsey elevated the funeral profession through her wisdom and professionalism. In recognition, her chair was decorated for 30 days and members wore memorial pins in her memory. Dr. Lyons offered a tribute highlighting her enduring legacy, noting that her work continues to speak for her. Dr. Kelsey's daughter, Adrianna Kelsey, expressed gratitude for the Board's tribute. The Board acknowledged Dr. Kelsey's continuation of her late father's legacy of service, affirming that her presence will be deeply missed but her contributions will remain an inspiration.

Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Dr. Lyons, the Board voted unanimously by roll call that upon notification of the death of a former Board member, staff shall furnish to the next of kin a framed resolution or proclamation honoring their service. Upon the notification of the death of a sitting Board member or former Board President, staff will also furnish the next of kin a North Carolina state flag in their honor.

Mr. Hilderbrand then recognized Ms. Acord Elston for the Executive Director's report.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Acord Elston based her report upon the following:

Annual Meeting of The Conference – The Annual Meeting will be held February 23-26 at the Seelbach Hilton in Louisville KY. Ms. Acord Elston indicated that she needed to know who would be attending so she could get hotel reservations made. She also indicated that The Conference will be holding elections for 3 vacancies on their Board of Directors.

Off-Duty Officer for Board Meetings – Ms. Acord Elston reported that she had obtained the proper insurances to be able to have an off-duty City of Raleigh officer at future Board meetings and Hearings.

Office Manager Vacancy- The job announcement was posted on the Board website, LinkedIn, the National Funeral Directors Association job board, the NC Funeral Directors Association job board, and the FDMANC. Several applications were received and Ms. Acord Elston indicated that she would be sorting through those applications and conducting phone interviews over the next few weeks.

Receptionist Vacancy – Ms. Acord Elston indicated that a new temporary employee would be starting in this position to help ensure phone coverage for the renewal period and holidays.

Renewals – The renewal portal will be opened and posted on the Board website on Monday, November 24, 2025.

Mr. Hilderbrand then gave an update regarding meetings he attended with the Commission of Anatomy on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Hilderbrand then recognized Ms. Lee for the legal report.

Legal Report

Ms. Lee presented the following metrics regarding disciplinary and preneed matters:

DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

Current Active Cases: 56

Pending Investigation: 21

Pending Review by Disciplinary Committee: 0

Pending Dispositive Action: 23

 Pending Hearing: 10

 Post-Hearing: 0

 Other: 2

New files opened since last Board meeting: 11 C-Files; 5 M-Files

Notices of Hearing sent since last Board meeting: 2

Consent Orders received since last Board meeting: 1

Cases reviewed by Disciplinary Committee since last Board meeting: 23

PRENEED RECOVERY FUND CLAIMS

Current Active Preened Recovery Fund Claims: 3

 Pending Investigation: 3

 Pending Dispositive Action: 0

Preened Recovery Fund Claims received since last Board meeting: 0

Preened Recovery Fund Claims re-opened since last Board meeting: 0

Preened Recovery Fund Claims reviewed by Committee since last Board meeting: 0

Mr. Hilderbrand then asked Mr. Lisenbee if he had any updates from the Inspections department. Mr. Lisenbee indicated that inspections numbers and progress were tracking as expected.

Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Mr. Hincer the Board voted unanimously by roll call to amend the following rules:

- 21 NCAC 34A .0101 (Agency Name and Address)
- 21 NCAC 34A .0123 (Consumer Complaint Form)
- 21 NCAC 34A .0127 (Submission of Documents)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0104 (Change in Employment)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0110 (Work Reports and Checklists)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0126 (Embalming, Funeral Directing and Funeral Service Training)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0202 (Applications)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0401 (Establishment and Approval of Courses)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0414 (Accreditation of Computer-Based CE)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0507 (Courtesy Cards)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0508 (Application Form for Courtesy Card)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0510 (Courtesy Card Renewal Form)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0605 (Permits: Transfer of Ownership of Establishment)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0613 (Disclosure statements)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0615 (Funeral Establishment Inspection Form)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0703 (Disposal of Refuse: Ventilation)
- 21 NCAC 34B .0706 (Registration of Embalming Facility Located Outside of a Funeral Establishment)
- 21 NCAC 34D .0304 (Transfer of Trust Funds)

Upon a motion by Dr. Lyons and a second by Mr. Overcash the Board voted unanimously by roll call to repeal the following rules:

- 21 NCAC 34B .0501 (Application for License)
- 21 NCAC 34C .0305 (Monthly Reports)

Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Mr. Hincer the Board voted unanimously by roll call to convene in closed session to hear matters subject to attorney-client confidentiality pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11.

Upon a motion by Dr. Lyons and a second by Mr. Overcash the Board voted unanimously by roll call to reconvene in open session.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hinchler and a second by Dr. Lyons the Board voted unanimously by roll call to accept the Consent Orders in the matter of Gilliam Memorial Mortuary, Inc., Gilliam Mutual Burial Association, Inc. d/b/a Gilliam MBA, and George L. Puckett, Jr., Board Case Nos. M18-0049/M21-0107;M25-008 and in the matter of Cremation by Simplicity, LLC and Charles C. Hodges, Board Case No. M25-0049.

Old Business

Mr. Hilderbrand then asked Ms. Acord Elston to present the remainder of the Finance & Personnel Committee items.

Ms. Acord Elston presented the updated organizational chart for review. She explained that organizational charts are dynamic tools that can be adjusted to reflect current staffing levels and workflow, providing a clear visual representation of the structure and roles within the organization. Ms. Acord Elston noted that the updated chart depicts the management team as equals. She emphasized the importance of maintaining an up-to-date chart to support the hiring process for current staff vacancies. She also proposed changing the Compliance Officer title to Compliance Director and the Preneed Compliance Inspector to Preneed Compliance Officer.

Ms. Acord Elston then presented a salary study she had conducted using data from the NC Office of Human Resources to establish salary ranges for the Board's current positions. She also presented 2026 budget documents. Discussion ensued.

Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter not subject to public disclosure pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11(6).

Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Mr. Hinchler the Board voted unanimously by roll call to reconvene in open session.

Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Ms. Coleman, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to accept the updated organizational chart, to change the Compliance Officer and Preneed Compliance Inspector titles, to accept the 2026 budget documents as presented which included the proposed staff salaries for 2026, and to have the Executive Director and Compliance Officer undergo a performance evaluation.

Board staff then asked the Board to consider changing the signatures on wall licenses that are sent to all establishments by removing the Board President Signature and changing the Executive Director signature to the Compliance Director signature.

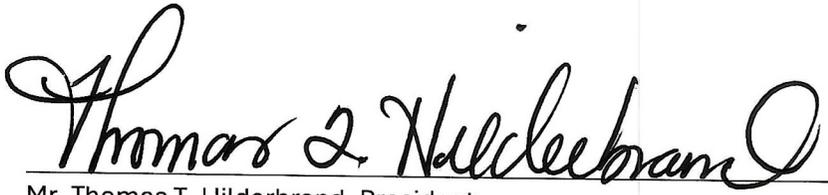
Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Mr. Hinchler, the Board voted unanimously to allow staff to change the signatures on the wall licenses sent to establishments.

New Business

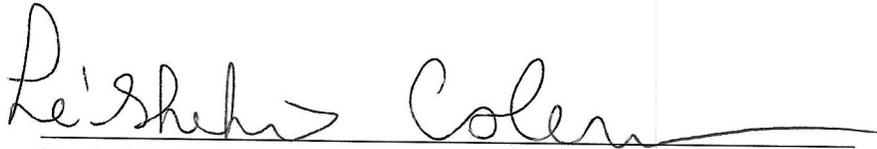
Mr. Lisenbee gave a brief update regarding technical changes being made to the Board's practice act through the N. C. General Statutes Commission.

Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Ms. Coleman the Board voted unanimously by roll call to adjourn the meeting.

Affirmation:



Mr. Thomas T. Hilderbrand, President



Ms. Le'Shekia Coleman, Secretary

December 10, 2025
Date