



NORTH CAROLINA  
BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE

Minutes

December 10, 2025 Board Meeting

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The North Carolina Board of Funeral Service convened for a duly scheduled Board meeting on December 10, 2025, at the Board offices at 1033 Wade Avenue, Suite 108, Raleigh, NC 27605.

Present: Mr. Thomas Hilderbrand, President; Mr. Richard Hinchler, 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. Hasten Wall, Funeral Service Licensee and Mr. Anthony Worley, FDMANC.

Mr. Hilderbrand convened the meeting at 9:19 a.m. and recognized Mr. Hinchler 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 November 19, 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 November 19, 2025, minutes.

***Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Mr. Hinchler, the Board voted unanimously to approve the November 19, 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 Ms. Coleman, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Disciplinary Committee report with the following dispositions:***

- Dismissals: C25-0076, C25-0100, C25-0106, C25-0109, C25-0112, C25-0113, C25-0115
- Issuance of Letter of Caution: None
- Notice of Hearing: C25-0104

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 December 4, 2025, and reviewed the statement of net position and the statement of revenues and expenses for the period ending October 31, 2025.

Her summary was based upon the following committee report:

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 approximately \$3.1 million and that total liabilities and net position remained at approximately \$3.6 million.

Ms. Acord Elston then reported that revenue collected for the current reporting period stands at 91.6%, compared to 91.9% during the same period in 2024. She noted that, based on the fiscal calendar, line items should be approximately 83.3%. Ms. Acord Elston concluded by noting that total operating expenses for the current reporting period were at 80%, which is 3.3% below the expected level.

Ms. Acord Elston gave a brief update on the Office Manager vacancy and welcomed Autumn Gardner as the Board's new temporary receptionist. She also reported that renewals were underway and she and Mr. Lisenbee were working diligently to work out any issues licensee may be having with the renewal portal.

***Upon a motion by Mr. Hinchler and a second by Ms. Coleman, the Board voted unanimously for approval of the financial reports for the period ending October 31, 2025.***

Mr. Hilderbrand then recognized Mr. Lisenbee for the Exam Committee Report.

## **Exam Committee Report**

Mr. Lisenbee indicated that the Exam Committee met on December 8, 2025. His summary was based on the following committee report:

Mr. Lisenbee reported that staff convened the Committee to review changes to the NC Laws and Rules exam required by the recent passing of HB 1003. Staff, in consultation with The Conference, identified five questions that needed updated, and the revised exam is prepared for publication. He noted that SL 2025-76 has not been officially published into the Board's practice act and that the Revisor of Statutes will likely not merge HB1003 until the end of the General Assembly's 2025-2026 session. As a result, the Board's website links to Laws and Rules remain static and do not yet reflect recent legislative changes. The posted statutes show the law as it existed prior to the effective dates of July 9 or October 1. To address this, staff have mirrored the General Assembly's website onto the Board's website so that each section modified by law changes includes a "modified by" link, ensuring applicants can identify updates even before the statutes are formally consolidated. Mr. Lisenbee also pointed out that having more than one link could cause confusion among exam applicants who are using the Board website to study for the exam.

The Committee then discussed communication strategies that would allow staff to launch the new exam as well as informing applicants on how to study the new Statutes.

After discussion, the Committee and Board staff agreed the updated exam should launch January 1, 2026, with staff responsible for obtaining a list from The Conference of all exam applicants and notifying current and future exam applicants on how to use the links posted on the Board's website for study purposes.

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:

Renewals – The renewal portal is now open. Ms. Acord Elston indicated that she and Mr. Lisenbee met with the database management vendor by telephone earlier in the week to work out issues with the portal.

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.

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: 42

Pending Investigation: 24

Pending Review by Disciplinary Committee: 0

Pending Dispositive Action: 8

    Pending Hearing: 9

    Post-Hearing: 0

    Other: 1

New files opened since last Board meeting: 10 C-Files; 1 M-Files

Notices of Hearing sent since last Board meeting: 0

Consent Orders received since last Board meeting: 0

Cases reviewed by Disciplinary Committee since last Board meeting: 8

#### PRENEED RECOVERY FUND CLAIMS

Current Active Preneed Recovery Fund Claims: 3

Pending Investigation: 3

Pending Dispositive Action: 0

Preneed Recovery Fund Claims received since last Board meeting: 1

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

Preneed 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. Hinchler and a second by Mr. Overcash the Board voted unanimously 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 Mr. Nunnaley and a second by Dr. Lyons the Board voted unanimously to reconvene in open session.*

*Upon a motion by Mr. Hinchler and a second by Dr. Lyons the Board voted unanimously to accept the request for Declaratory Ruling.*

*Upon a motion by Ms. Coleman and a second by Mr. Hinchler the Board voted unanimously to issue a Declaratory Ruling finding that a licensee of the Board who does not own, who is not employed by and who is not otherwise an agent of a licensed funeral establishment, but who is an employee of a college of mortuary science cannot legally practice funeral service for consumers on behalf of a business other than the college of mortuary science.*

### **New Business**

The Board then held Board officer elections for 2026 by ballot.

By majority vote, Ms. Le'Shekia Coleman was elected to serve as Board President for 2026.

By majority vote, Mr. Gary Overcash was elected to serve as Board Vice-President for 2026.

By majority vote, Mr. Robert Nunnaley was elected to serve as Board Secretary for 2026.

Ms. Acord Elston then presented the 2026 meeting schedule. Discussion ensued regarding remote meetings for 2026.

*Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Mr. Sutphin, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the 2026 meeting schedule as presented.*

**Old Business**

Mr. Hilderbrand then asked Ms. Acord Elston to present any matters for old business.


Ms. Acord Elston presented the Employee Handbook for final approval.

*Upon a motion by Dr. Lyons and a second by Ms. Coleman, the Board voted unanimously to approve the revised employee handbook.*

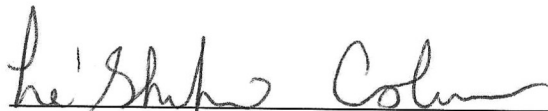
*Upon a motion by Mr. Nunnaley and a second by Mr. Sutphin the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.*

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**Affirmation:**



Mr. Thomas T. Hilderbrand, President



Ms. Le'Shekia Coleman, Secretary

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Date