



NORTH CAROLINA  
BOARD OF FUNERAL SERVICE

Minutes

March 11, 2026 Board Meeting

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The North Carolina Board of Funeral Service convened for a duly scheduled Board meeting on March 11, 2026, at the Board offices at 1033 Wade Avenue, Suite 108, Raleigh, NC 27605.

Present: Ms. Le'Shekia Coleman, President; Mr. Gary Overcash, Vice President; Mr. Robert Nunnaley, Secretary; Mr. Thomas Hilderbrand, Mr. Brian Sutphin, Mr. Jonathan Holland, Mr. Anthony Worley, and Ms. Cheryl Anderson. 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. Guest in attendance were: Hasten Wall, Funeral Service Licensee; Billy Babb, NCBFS Compliance Inspector; Dominique Tucker, NCBFS Preneed Program Specialist.

Ms. Coleman convened the meeting at 9:03 a.m. and recognized Mr. Overcash for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. She asked Mr. Nunnaley for the invocation. Following the invocation, Ms. Coleman read the Statement of Ethics and asked if any Board members had any conflict or appearance of conflict of interest. Mr. Hilderbrand recused himself from case no. C25-0006.

Ms. Coleman then asked for public comment. Hearing none, Ms. Coleman then recognized Mr. Nunnaley for the presentation of the minutes from the February 11, 2026 meeting. Mr. Nunnaley stated that staff had provided the minutes prior to the meeting for review and invited any changes or amendments. Ms. Coleman then invited a motion for approval of February 11, 2026, minutes.

***Upon a motion by Mr. Holland and a second by Ms. Anderson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the February 11, 2026, minutes.***

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

***Upon a motion by Mr. Hilderbrand and a second by Mr. Nunnaley, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve the Disciplinary Committee report with the following dispositions:***

- Summary Dismissals: C26-0006
- Dismissals: C25-0111, C25-0125, C25-129, C25-0131, C25-0134, C25-0137, C26-0002, C26-0003, C26-0004, C26-0005, C26-0007, C26-0010, C26-0011, C26-0012
- Letter of Caution: C25-0105, C25-0135
- Other: M26-0004, M26-0012, M26-0013, M26-0015

Ms. Coleman then recognized Ms. Acord Elston for the Finance & 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 March 5, 2026, and reviewed the statement of net position and the statement of revenues and expenses for the period ending December 31, 2025.

Her summary was based upon the following committee report:

Ms. Acord Elston then summarized the Statement of Net Position, noting that the financials remained stable, with continued growth across various account balances. She reported that total liabilities and net position were approximately \$4 million. She also explained that total assets, total liabilities and net position provide a high-level view of the Board's overall financial standing, but none of these figures represent cash that is immediately available for use. Only cash and cash-equivalent accounts such as the First Citizens and First Horizon accounts, reflect funds that are readily available.

Ms. Acord Elston then reported that the percent of budget used for FY2025 was 98.6%, which is 1.4% under budget. Ms. Acord Elston noted that a larger variance below budget was expected, but it was due to several individual line items significantly exceeding the budgeted amounts, which offset savings in other areas. Mr. Hilderbrand commented that he felt the money was well spent.

Ms. Acord Elston then gave a brief update on staff issues. The Committee then discussed at length various ways to alleviate excessive calls and emails to upper management.

The Committee then discussed continued efforts to implement the Lockbox feature for preneed contract submissions and other areas the Board can transition from paper-based forms to electronic forms.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Acord Elston discussed the following items:

Licensure and Inspection Reports – There is a slight increase in licenses issued for February compared to previous months.

Board Reports – Multiple reports require submission to different agencies at the beginning of each year.

Audit – The 2025 financial audit is underway, with field work beginning March 16. Staff is anticipating another strong audit.

SEI Reports – Board members should file their annual SEI report to the State Ethics Commission by April 15, 2026.

Annual Conference Attendance – The Annual Meeting of The Conference offered strong networking opportunities and informative sessions. Insights from other jurisdictions about issues they face were

particularly valuable. Ms. Coleman recognized Ms. Acord Elston on her appointment to the Board of Directors of the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards.

Mr. Hilderbrand noted and appreciated Board Compliance Inspector Mr. Babb for his attendance at the Board meeting.

Ms. Coleman 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: 91

Pending Investigation: 43

Pending Review by Disciplinary Committee: 0

Pending Dispositive Action: 23

    Pending Hearing: 15

    Post-Hearing: 0

    Other: 10

New files opened since last Board meeting: 14 C-Files; 9 M-Files

Notices of Hearing sent since last Board meeting: 3

Consent Orders received since last Board meeting: 0

Cases reviewed by Disciplinary Committee since last Board meeting: 23

#### PRENEED RECOVERY FUND CLAIMS

Current Active Preneed Recovery Fund Claims: 5

    Pending Investigation: 5

    Pending Dispositive Action: 0

Preneed Recovery Fund Claims received since last Board meeting: 0

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

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

Mr. Overcash commended Ms. Lee and her staff for keeping the Board's legal cases on track.

## **Old Business**

Mr. Lisenbee reported that he is continuing efforts to arrange a visit to a natural organic reduction facility. A new site is expected to open soon near North Carolina, and the visit will occur once it is operational.

Ms. Coleman then asked Ms. Lee to present the proposed revisions to 21 NCAC 34C .0102 and 21 NCAC 34C .0103.

***Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Mr. Sutphin the Board voted unanimously to initiate Rulemaking to revise 21 NCAC 34C .0102 and 21 NCAC 34C .0103.***

## **New Business**

Ms. Coleman then called for any new business. Mr. Overcash extended well-wishes to Board members and licensees in recognition of National Funeral Director and Morticians Day.

***Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Mr. Hilderbrand the Board voted unanimously by roll call to convene in closed session to hear matters subject to attorney-client confidentiality pursuant to and to discuss a personnel matter not subject to public disclosure pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11.***

***Upon a motion by Mr. Worley and a second by Mr. Overcash the Board voted unanimously to reconvene in open session.***

***Upon proper motion the Board voted unanimously to direct staff to issue another communication to stakeholders regarding the Lockbox feature for preneed contract submissions, post downloadable labels with the new PO Box on the Board's website, and forward any contracts received in the Board office to the PO Box via FedEx or UPS.***

***Upon a motion by Mr. Overcash and a second by Ms. Anderson the Board voted unanimously to accept the Consent Judgement against C. C. Hodges in his individual capacity, and the following businesses: C. C. Hodge Funeral Home, C. C. Hodges and Sons Funeral & Cremations, and Cremations by simplicity.***

The Board then conducted a hearing in the matter of Board Case Number C25-0104 Harvesting Hope Inc. d/b/a Hope Valley Hawkins Funeral Service & Cremation and Paul Thomas Ayers Hawkins.

***Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously to convene in closed session to deliberate.***

***Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously to reconvene in open session.***

***Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously to suspend Mr. Hawkins funeral director license number 4910, until such time as he completes the Board's crematory continuing education course, after which his license will be reinstated. Mr. Hawkins may not serve in North Carolina as the manager of a funeral home for a period of 2 years; to suspend the establishment license for Harvesting Hope, Inc. d/b/a Hope Valley Hawkins Funeral Service***

***& Cremation for 2 years and that suspension is stayed provided there are no further violations of NC General Statutes governing funeral service; and a compromise penalty in the amount of \$3,700 shall be remitted within one year of the date the order is signed; and that General Counsel will provide an affidavit of fees and costs for the show cause hearing which must be paid within 60 days.***

The Board then conducted a hearing in the matter of Board Case number C25-0088, Thomie D. Douthit, d/b/a Douthit Funeral Services and Thomie D. Douthit.

***Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously to convene in closed session to deliberate.***

***Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously to reconvene in open session.***

The Board found no violations in the matter of Board Case number C25-0088, but recommended that all staff take the Board Cremation Continuing Education class by June 30, 2026.

The Board then conducted a hearing in the matter of Board Case number M25-0059, Charles Jody Britt.

***Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously to convene in closed session to deliberate.***

***Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously to reconvene in open session.***

***Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously to renew Mr. Britt's funeral director license for 2026; however, the license shall be placed on probation for a period of 2 years. If a drug conviction or probation violation occurs during the probationary period the license will be revoked.***

***Upon proper motion, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.***

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Affirmation:

*Le'Shekia Coleman*

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Ms. Le'Shekia Coleman, President

*Robert Nunnaley*

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Mr. Robert Nunnaley, Secretary

*8, April 2026*

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Date