

Oriental Ordinance 2025-335

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ORIENTAL CODE OF GENERAL ORDINANCES. ESTABLISHING A TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD FOR THE TOWN OF ORIENTAL, NORTH CAROLINA

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE TOWN OF ORIENTAL

SECTION 1. *That the Oriental Code of General Ordinances, Chapter L, entitled Tourism, be amended by repealing and replacing with the following Ordinance:*

WHEREAS The Town Board of Commissioners recognizes that tourism, waterfront recreation, maritime culture, and small business vitality are central to the Town's economic well-being and quality of life; and The Town serves as a regional destination for boating, sailing, fishing, festivals, and waterfront activities along the Neuse River and Pamlico Sound; and The Board of Commissioners finds it beneficial to establish an advisory board to assist in promoting tourism, supporting local businesses, encouraging responsible economic growth, and strengthening the Town's reputation as a welcoming destination.

Section 1. Establishment

There is hereby created the Oriental Tourism and Economic Development Board (TEDB). The TEDB shall function as an advisory body to the Town Board of Commissioners regarding tourism promotion, economic development initiatives, and related strategic opportunities within the Town.

Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of the TEDB is to promote Oriental as a destination for tourism, boating, sailing, fishing, and waterfront recreation; support the vitality of local businesses; enhance the visitor experience while preserving the Town's coastal character; encourage responsible economic development; support community festivals and maritime events; and advise the Board of Commissioners on tourism promotion and economic development strategies.

Section 3. Composition

The TEDB shall consist of seven (7) members appointed by the Board of Commissioners. Representation should, when possible, include local business owners, hospitality or tourism professionals, marina or maritime interests, marketing or event planning professionals, and residents with community development experience. At least four (4) members shall reside within the Town limits. One member of the Board of Commissioners shall be appointed to act as ex officio member to the Tourism and Economic Development Board and shall have the right to vote

only when there is a tie, meaning that the number of votes is equal in the affirmative and in the negative.

Section 4. Terms of Office

Members shall serve three-year staggered terms. Initial appointments may include two members appointed for one year, two members appointed for two years, and three members appointed for three years.

Section 5. Vacancies

Vacancies shall be filled by the Board of Commissioners for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Section 6. Officers

The TEDB shall annually elect from among its members a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary (if staff support is not assigned). Officers shall serve one-year terms and may be re-elected to one additional one-year term.

Section 7. Meetings

The TEDB shall meet monthly or more frequently as needed. Meetings shall comply with North Carolina Open Meetings requirements. A majority of appointed members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 8. Duties and Responsibilities

The TEDB shall recommend tourism promotion strategies, support maritime tourism and waterfront activities, assist in developing marketing initiatives and visitor materials, collaborate with regional tourism organizations, recommend tourism-related improvements, and submit an annual report to the Board of Commissioners. The TEDB shall serve in an advisory capacity and shall not expend Town funds unless authorized by the Board of Commissioners. The TEDB shall provide a monthly briefing/meeting minutes in advance of the monthly Town Board meeting.

Section 9. Staff Support

The Town Manager may designate staff to provide administrative support to the Board.

Section 10. Removal

Members may be removed by the Board of Commissioners for failure to attend three consecutive meetings without excuse, misconduct or conflict of interest, or failure to fulfill the duties of the position.

Section 11. Occupancy Tax Funding

The Town receives revenues derived from a local occupancy tax authorized under North Carolina law. A portion of such funds shall be allocated for tourism-related expenditures, including marketing and promotion, visitor services, tourism events and festivals, advertising campaigns, tourism-related capital improvements, and development of materials promoting Oriental as a boating, sailing, and waterfront destination.

Section 12. Advisory Role in Occupancy Tax Use

The Tourism and Economic Development Board may review proposed uses of occupancy tax revenues allocated to the Town and provide recommendations to the Board of Commissioners

regarding tourism promotion priorities and marketing strategies. The Board shall not independently appropriate or expend occupancy tax funds.

Section 13. Coordination with County Tourism Authorities

The TEDB may coordinate with Pamlico County or regional tourism organizations to support tourism promotion that benefits the Town of Oriental.

Section 14. Annual Tourism Work Plan

The TEDB shall prepare an annual tourism promotion work plan and budget recommendation identifying proposed marketing initiatives, tourism-related events or partnerships, visitor services improvements, and recommended use of available occupancy tax revenues.

SECTION 2. *That the Ordinance takes effect immediately upon passage.*

Adopted this 25th day of June, 2026

Mayor Sally Belangia

Attest:

Diane H. Miller, Clerk to the Board

CHAPTER L – TOURISM BOARD

ARTICLE I -- General

Section 1 – Establishment and Jurisdiction

There is hereby established a board known as the Tourism Board whose responsibility shall be to direct the disposition of the fifty percent (50%) of the Occupancy Tax set aside by law for the promotion of tourism in the Town of Oriental.

Section 2 – Composition

- a) The Tourism Board shall consist of five (5) regular members with an emphasis on seeking members that are affiliated with businesses or organizations that collect the Town's Occupancy Tax plus one (1) ex officio member appointed by the Mayor from the Town Board.
- b) All members shall be either residents of the Town of Oriental, or owners or employees of a business located within the Town limits.
- c) All new members are required to attend two (2) regular consistent meetings within 12 months before being considered to the Tourism Board.
- d) Members shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners.
- e) One member of the Board of Commissioners shall be appointed to act as ex officio member to the Tourism Board and shall have the right to vote only when the number of votes is equal in the affirmative or in the negative.

Section 3 – Terms of Office

- a) All members of the Tourism Board shall serve without compensation. In the case of a vacancy occurring during a term, the Board of Commissioners shall appoint a replacement for the unexpired term. Members appointed to fill vacancies shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term for which they are appointed to fill. Members shall be appointed for a term of three years (3), except for the Town Board member, who will only serve while a member of the Board of Commissioners.
- b) All terms shall end on March 31, and a successor shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners at the March town meeting to take office on April 1. Members may continue to serve until their successors have been appointed.
- c) The membership rights of a Tourism Board may be terminated by a majority vote of the Board of Commissioners for causes deemed appropriate by such Board, including without limitation, the failure to attend a least 50% of the regularly scheduled meetings of the Tourism Board.

Section 4 – Rules, Meetings, and Records

- a) The members of the Tourism Board shall elect their chairman annually at the April meeting.

- b) The Tourism Board shall meet at the call of the chairman at least six (6) times annually: once in each of the following months: January, March, April, June, August, and October. Other meetings shall be held at the discretion of the Tourism Board as deemed necessary.
- c) All meetings shall be considered public, and notice of such meetings shall be given as required by law.
- d) The Chairman shall report all decisions of the Tourism Board to the Board of Commissioners at the next Town Meeting for approval by the Board of Commissioners. No decision by the Tourism Board shall be final until it is approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Section 5 - Use of Occupancy Tax Revenue

- a) At least one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the proceeds shall be used only to promote travel and tourism in the town with 80% to be spent to increase the use of lodging facilities in the town and the remaining 20% is to be used based on the term “promote travel and tourism” means to advertise or market an area or activity, publish and distribute pamphlets and other materials, conduct market research, host and conduct tours for travel industry representatives and travel writers, or engage in similar promotional activities that attract tourists or business travelers to the town; the term includes administrative expenses of the town incurred in engaging in the listed activities, administered by the Tourism Board with approval by the Town Board.
- b) The remaining one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) shall be used only for tourism-related expenditures. The term “tourism-related expenditures” means expenditures that are designed to increase the use of lodging facilities in the town or attract tourist or business travelers to the town and the cost of administering and collecting the tax; the term includes expenditures to construct, maintain or repair a visitor’s center, a convention facility, a museum, an historic attraction or a publicly owned waterfront structure, but does not include other capital expenditures as administered by the Town Board.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

SESSION LAW 2026-15
SENATE BILL 484

AN ACT TO CLARIFY THE APPROPRIATE USE OF PROCEEDS OF A ROOM OCCUPANCY TAX THAT MAY BE USED FOR TOURISM-RELATED EXPENDITURES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 160A-215 reads as rewritten:

"§ 160A-215. **Uniform provisions for room occupancy taxes.**

- ***
(f1) Use. – The proceeds of a room occupancy tax shall not be used as follows:
- (1) ~~for~~ For development or construction of a hotel or another transient lodging facility.
 - (2) For the proceeds of a room occupancy tax that may be used for tourism-related expenditures, for services ordinarily provided by a city for its residents, or for purposes that are designed for or primarily benefit residents of the city unless explicitly authorized by local act, including all of the following:
 - a. Solid waste collection or disposal.
 - b. Water supply, distribution, or treatment.
 - c. Fire protection.
 - d. Law enforcement, public safety services, or emergency services.
 - e. Affordable housing.
 - f. Education.

(g) Applicability. – Subsection (c) of this section applies to all cities that levy an occupancy tax. To the extent subsection (c) conflicts with any provision of a local act, subsection (c) supersedes that provision. Subdivision (2) of subsection (f1) of this section applies to all cities that levy an occupancy tax. The remainder of this section applies only to Beech Mountain District W, to the Cities of Belmont, Burlington, Conover, Eden, Elizabeth City, Gastonia, Goldsboro, Graham, Greensboro, Hickory, High Point, Indian Trail, Jacksonville, Kings Mountain, Lake Santeetlah, Lenoir, Lexington, Lincolnton, Lowell, Lumberton, Mebane, Monroe, Mount Airy, Mount Holly, Reidsville, Roanoke Rapids, Salisbury, Sanford, Shelby, Statesville, Washington, and Wilmington, to the Towns of Ahoskie, Beech Mountain, Benson, Bermuda Run, Blowing Rock, Boiling Springs, Boone, Burgaw, Carolina Beach, Carrboro, Cooleemee, Cramerton, Dallas, Dobson, Elkin, Elon, Fontana Dam, Four Oaks, Franklin, Grover, Hillsborough, Jefferson, Jonesville, Kenly, Kure Beach, Lansing, Leland, McAdenville, Mocksville, Mooresville, Murfreesboro, North Topsail Beach, Pembroke, Pilot Mountain, Ranlo, Robbinsville, Selma, Smithfield, St. James, St. Pauls, Swansboro, Troutman, Tryon, West Jefferson, Wrightsville Beach, Yadkinville, Yanceyville, to the municipalities in Avery and Brunswick Counties, to Clayton District C, Saluda District D, and Stallings District S."

SECTION 2. G.S. 153A-155 reads as rewritten:

"§ 153A-155. **Uniform provisions for room occupancy taxes.**

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(f1) Use. – The proceeds of a room occupancy tax shall not be used as follows:



- (1) ~~for~~ For development or construction of a hotel or another transient lodging facility.
- (2) For the proceeds of a room occupancy tax that may be used for tourism-related expenditures, for services ordinarily provided by a county for its residents, or for purposes that are designed for or primarily benefit residents of the county unless explicitly authorized by local act, including all of the following:
 - a. Solid waste collection or disposal.
 - b. Water supply, distribution, or treatment.
 - c. Fire protection.
 - d. Law enforcement, public safety services, or emergency services.
 - e. Affordable housing.
 - f. Education.

(g) Applicability. – Subsection (c) of this section applies to all counties and county districts that levy an occupancy tax. To the extent subsection (c) conflicts with any provision of a local act, subsection (c) supersedes that provision. Subdivision (2) of subsection (f1) of this section applies to all counties that levy an occupancy tax. The remainder of this section applies only to Alleghany, Anson, Bertie, Brunswick, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Camden, Carteret, Caswell, Chatham, Cherokee, Chowan, Clay, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Davie, Duplin, Durham, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Franklin, Graham, Granville, Halifax, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Madison, Martin, McDowell, Mitchell, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Person, Randolph, Richmond, Rockingham, Rowan, Rutherford, Sampson, Scotland, Stanly, Stokes, Swain, Transylvania, Tyrrell, Union, Vance, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Wilson, and Yancey Counties, to Avery County District A, Graham County District G, Harnett County District H, Iredell County District I, New Hanover County District U, Pender County District P, Surry County District S, Watauga County District U, Wilkes County District W, Yadkin County District Y, and the Township of Averasboro in Harnett County and the Ocracoke Township Taxing District."

SECTION 3. This act is effective when it becomes law and applies to the expenditure of occupancy tax proceeds collected on or after that date.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 18th day of June, 2026.

s/ Rachel Hunt
President of the Senate

s/ Donna McDowell White
Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives

s/ Josh Stein
Governor

Approved 3:27 p.m. this 22nd day of June, 2026