

September 2025 Managers Report

covers the period August 1, 2025 through August 31, 2025

Financial Report- Attached. \$72,000 from FEMA received. Note running behind- and \$100,000 moved in from investment- normal for beginning of the year.

Equipment Disposal: Copier remains Equipment being offered at basic prices. Pamlico News, Facebook, bulletin boards. Board can authorize disposal by gifting for items of minimal value.

You still have a vacancy on the **Board of BRMSD** since Deb Khouri's resignation last summer.

<u>Project Updates:</u> Whittaker Creek Dredge- dredge bid is out- due in by Sept 22. NCGS specifically remove Dredging from the normal bidding rules, so that the first bid- if anyone participates, can be awarded. Three are not required.

TRC/Water Treatment Rehab will be covered by Commissioner Crosser.

Copper Effluent: Assessments for December 2024, January, February, and March of 2025 have been received. Consultant engaged for remission request. We have requested the modeling original numbers from the Wooten Company.

<u>Printed vs. eBills:</u> Obviously, we will not be charging for paper bills until our new printer stops printing and sending all bills. More than half of our customers are now receiving eBills.

Included for your nightstand reading: Coates' Canons from UNC SOG: Board Actions and Power of the Mayor, The State of Public Budget Reporting by Euna, Flex billing statement from Chargepoint- one active week- netted \$75.50, The Administrator- NCCCMA- Rob Sheperd, long time advocate retiring, notice of Frayda Bluestein's passing, article concerning harassment impact on staff, study on NC lagging behind on community engagement.

Duke Power Clearing: Have been in contact with our rep with our concerns.

Second settlement check to be received from PFAS litigation: \$16,043.78

1	Town of Oriental Monthly Budget Report- MajorFunds Only 16.6 % of Fiscal Year Completed August 2025										
2		eted 25-26 YTD 2	5-26 August		O 24-25 August						
3	REVENUES										
4	Property Tax	\$550,678.00	\$53,535.56	10%	\$75,035.78						
5	Sales Tax	\$258,148.00	\$0.00	0%	\$0.00						
6	State-Shared Revenues	\$77,985.00		0%	\$0.00						
8	Solid Waste Fees Development Permit Fees	\$172,600.00 \$8,500.00	\$30,354.25 \$2,425.00	18% 29%	\$29,687.30 \$750.00						
9	DMV Tax			13%	\$4,356.91						
10	Grant Revenues	\$29,129.00 \$72,469.00		100%	\$0.00						
11	OtherRevenues	\$131,086.00		9%	\$12,465.79	*					
12	GF Interest Earnings Appropriated Fund Balance	\$25,500.00 \$16,966.00		7% 0%	\$2,407.53 \$0.00	*not from investments					
13				***							
14	TOTAL G/F REVENUES	\$1,343,061.00	\$176,578.50	13%	\$124,703.31						
14	EXPENDITURES										
15 16	Legal	\$13,500.00	\$1,430.00	11%	\$1,220.00	1 time expenses					
17	Administration Police	\$443,861.00 \$157,942.00		28% 22%	\$107,324.69 \$27,130.32	pay out Blayney/car repair					
18	Public Works	\$371,360.00		13%	\$27,409.05	raj out Siajnoj/our repun					
19	Sanitation	\$198,562.00	\$17,464.78	9%	\$14,791.66	cost \$208,943 in 24-25					
20	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,230,641.00	\$226,218.06	18%	\$177,875.72						
			-\$49,639.56		-\$53,172.41						
21	Water FUND Bu	udget 25-26 Actual	31 Aug 25-26	%Budget A	Aug 24-25						
22	WATER REVENUES										
23	Water Collections	\$379,610.00	\$69.614.75	18%	\$59,440.91						
24	All other Water revenue	\$59,100.00	\$6,100.88	10%	\$8,544.49						
25	TOTAL REVENUES	\$438,710.00	\$75,715.63	17%	\$67,985.40						
26	EXPENDITURES	\$ 10 01/ 10 TO	\$70,710,00	1770	\$07,000.10						
27	Administration	\$217,525.00	\$37,611.54	17%	\$38,203.46						
28	Operating	\$221,185.00	\$58,312.71	26%							
29	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$438,710.00	\$95,924.25	22%	\$88,261.93						
	Revenues over expenses		-\$20,208.62		-\$20,276.53						
30	Current Month Summary of cash accounts	24-25FYE	Last Month	Current Month							
31	GENERAL FUND Reg checking	\$98,891.03	\$120,382.59	\$173,639.00							
32	Fund Balance G/F	\$832,039.96		\$871,130.73	from reconciliation*		+				
33	NCCMT GF	\$472,884.60		\$374,557.34	nom reconcination						
2.4	WATER EVAND B. CL. III	#2/2 21/ (O	#2.40.22Z.0Z	#22 (25T T2							
34 35	WATER FUND Reg Checking	\$263,216.69		\$236,357.73							
33	Water- NCCMT Water Fund Balance	\$57,407.50 \$49,602.12		\$57,613.38 \$49,602.12	*not confirmed						
	Water I and Burdine	\$ 15,002.12	V 19,002.12	ψ.13,002.12	not committee						
36	OTHER FUNDS (Capital and Special Revenue) '				YTD 2025 OCC	YTD 2026 OCC					
37	Occ Tax- Waterfront enhancement	\$149,224.00		\$154,113.42	\$5,429.46	\$5,338.12					
38	Occ Tax - Parks and Recreation	\$10,766.00	. ,	\$13,673.66	\$2,171.73	\$2,135.22					
39	Occ Tax - Tourism	\$39,545.00	\$39,545.00	\$74,231.94	\$3,257.77	\$3,202.94	<u> </u>				
40					\$10,858.96	\$10,676.28					
70	Powell in First Citizens	\$29,648.82		\$29,648.82			+				
43	NCCMT Powell	\$121,194.00		\$122,484.15							
44	Total Powell	\$150,842.82		\$152,132.97							
45											
	1	1	ı	ı	·	L					



Coates' Canons NC Local Government Law

Board Action and the Powers of the Mayor

Published: 08/22/25

Author: Rebecca Fisher-Gabbard

In the fall of 2023, Matthew Creech won the mayoral race in Lucama, North Carolina as a write-in candidate. Immediately after new-mayor Creech took office, the town council (called the "board of commissioners") unanimously adopted a resolution "establishing the powers of the mayor and commissioners" in an "emergency special-called" meeting. The resolution divested certain powers from the mayor and limited the role to primarily "ceremonial" duties. The board adopted an amended resolution, largely to the same effect, four days later. Mayor Creech sued, alleging that the board engaged in a "concerted effort" to "strip the responsibilities, duties, and powers of the mayoral office" and shift them to the board, in violation of the law.

The Complaint asserted that the resolutions improperly "attempt[] to modify duly-enacted ordinances." (The Complaint, resolutions, meeting minutes, and other case filings are available through the eCourts portal. The records available online do not include a transcript of the hearing on the motion for summary judgment.) Earlier this month, a superior court judge granted the mayor's motion for summary judgment, declaring both the resolution and amended resolution regarding the power and duties of the mayor "null, void, and without legal effect." The judge's ruling was made without prejudice to the board's authority to act by ordinance pursuant to G.S. 160A-67 or by amendment to the town charter.

The Lucama case presents an opportunity to ask: What powers do mayors have? What authority does a board have to expand or contract those powers? By what action can a board repeal or amend an ordinance? What about a charter amendment? What does it mean, if anything, for a mayor to be labeled a "chief executive officer"? What's an "emergency special-called" meeting? This post explores each of these questions.

Mayoral Powers

Unlike mayors in many other states, in North Carolina, mayors have been granted by statute very

few formal powers and responsibilities. The basic grant is this:

- 1. Presiding over council meetings (G.S. 160A-69);
- 2. Generally, voting to break a tie or, where the mayor is elected from the membership of the council and the charter does not confer upon the mayor the right to vote, voting on all matters (G.S. 160A-69);
- 3. Serving as "official head" of the municipality for purposes of service in a civil proceeding as well as for ceremonial purposes (G.S. 160A-67); and
- 4. All other powers and duties enumerated by law (<u>G.S. 160A-67</u>).

That last category sounds broad but, in reality, is not. Few other "powers and duties" have been "enumerated" by law. Some are: (1) calling a special meeting (<u>G.S. 160A-71</u>); (2) declaring a state of emergency, if delegated by ordinance (<u>G.S. 166A-19.22(a)</u>); (3) filing annexation maps (<u>G.S. 160A-29</u>); and (4) making appointments to the public housing (<u>G.S. 157-5</u>) and hospital (<u>G.S. 131E-17</u>) authorities.

<u>A blog post</u> authored by School of Government faculty member Frayda Bluestein discusses the powers of mayors in North Carolina in detail. And <u>this chart</u> compares the statutory roles and responsibilities of the mayor, council, and manager.

In addition to these statutory powers and responsibilities, the law authorizes a town council to confer supplemental or discretionary powers and duties on the mayor (not inconsistent with the law). <u>G.S. 160A-67</u>. In Lucama, the board had addressed the mayor's powers and duties long before Mayor Creech's election. By ordinance, the board had provided that "The Mayor shall be the chief executive officer of the town" and had prescribed the following supplemental duties to the mayor:

- Keeping himself or herself informed as to the town's business;
- Presiding over the meetings of the board;
- Signing all contracts, ordinances, resolutions, franchises and all other documents as authorized by the board;
- Appointing all committees and outlining their duties, under the general direction of the board;
- Making recommendations to the board concerning the affairs of the town, as he or she deems necessary;
- Representing the town at ceremonies and other official occasions; and
- Performing other duties as authorized by the general statutes, the town charter and this code.

The resolutions adopted after Mayor Creech's election purported to "establish" a different set of powers for the mayor. They provided:

- "The Mayor shall serve as ceremonial head for the Town" (whereas the ordinance designated the mayor as CEO);
- "The Mayor and/or Commissioners may only sign documents, including checks, on behalf of the Town where authorized by law and/or the Board of Commissioners" (whereas the ordinance authorized the mayor to sign all contracts and other documents); and
- "The Mayor . . . shall not interfere with, harass, or unduly interrupt Town employees in the daily functions of their work" (whereas the ordinance required the mayor to stay informed of town business and make recommendations to the board).

As noted above, a city council may confer supplemental or discretionary powers upon a mayor in accordance with law. The dispute in this case asks how, exactly, a city council can prescribe these supplemental powers upon the mayor. What process should it follow? What type of board action is required? And may a city council amend or repeal, by *resolution*, those powers originally codified in an *ordinance*?

Board Action

G.S. 160A-67 does not specify a particular procedure by which a city council must confer discretionary mayoral powers. Frayda Bluestein opined that a town council might delegate additional powers to the mayor "by resolution or, over time and less explicitly, by practice and habit." Of course, such delegations are not permanently binding, so the city council may later enlarge or shrink the mayor's discretionary powers as it sees fit. And yet, as this case demonstrates, a city council should be careful to take the appropriate *type* of action in so doing. While perhaps a council could informally delegate discretionary powers to the mayor by resolution (or maybe even custom over time), it probably requires an act of "equal dignity" to contract, enlarge, or repeal those powers already established.

No North Carolina appellate court has directly addressed the question of whether a local government could repeal or amend an ordinance by some other type of board action, like a resolution. Typically, a council adopts a resolution to express a policy or make a public statement about an issue, or to take some kind of administrative or legal action, like selling property, approving a contract, or initiating an annexation. An ordinance, on the other hand, prescribes some standard of conduct in the local jurisdiction; essentially, it is a local law. Trey Allen (now a justice on the North Carolina Supreme Court) concluded that "[t]here are solid grounds for thinking that it takes an ordinance to repeal an ordinance." The trial court in this case seemed to agree.

Lucama's mayor, in part, argued that the board of commissioners could not act by resolution to

repeal or modify an *ordinance*. Because the mayor's supplemental powers were enacted by ordinance, only an ordinance or amendment could change those powers. Without access to the hearing transcript in the case, we can only assume that the trial court agreed, at least in part, with the mayor's argument on this point. While the trial court order in the Lucama case is not binding in other cases, it could forecast how courts will treat board action—in the context of mayoral powers and beyond—in future cases.

Charter Amendment

The minutes from the January 8 meeting of the Lucama board indicate that at least some board members thought the proposed amended resolution conflicted with the town *charter*, as opposed to the town *ordinance*. However, the <u>charter</u> of the Town of Lucama (as revised and consolidated in 1977) is silent as to the powers and duties of the mayor. The charter does establish, among other things, that: (1) the governing board shall consist of five board members and the mayor; (2) the mayor shall be elected by qualified voters of the town for a two-year term; and (3) the administration of the town shall operate under a mayor-council plan.

A city charter is a legislative act of the General Assembly establishing a municipal corporation, setting its boundaries, and determining its form of government. Changes to a town's charter may be made only by the General Assembly, except that in a limited way, the legislature has delegated authority to amend a charter to the city's council, voters, or both. That delegation extends to only nine categories of modifications including corporate name and style, style of governing board, terms of office, number of governing board members, mode of election, partisan or non-partisan elections, mayor selection, and form of government. <u>G.S. 160A-101</u>. Establishing the powers, duties, and/or responsibilities is not one of those categories. If a city council or voters desire to make some change not included in the listing, they must request that the General Assembly modify the charter for them.

Within the limited categories, the General Statutes set forth a <u>specific process</u> for local charter amendments. A School of Government <u>microsite</u> summarizes the process for modifying a town charter and includes answers to frequently asked questions.

Chief Executive Officer

The Lucama ordinances in effect when the new mayor took office designated the mayor as "chief

executive officer," consistent with the definition of mayor in Chapter 160A of the General Statutes. G.S. 160A-1(6). Despite the title, as explained above, mayors in North Carolina do not have executive authority, as a CEO might in the private sector. In fact, state law expressly prohibits the mayor (and council members) from serving as an interim or acting manager in a council-manager form of government.

The Town of Lucama, like many other municipalities with council-mayor forms of government, has delegated at least some hiring and supervising authority to a town administrator. No specific statute outlines the powers of an administrator (in contrast to the <u>statute</u> governing managers). However, <u>G.S. 160A-146</u> gives the city council broad authority to organize city government, and <u>G.S. 160A-155</u> authorizes the council to delegate hiring and firing authority to administrative officials or department heads.

For more on the role of the mayor and forms of government in North Carolina, see "Chapter 3: County and Municipal Governing Boards," authored by Kimberly Nelson, in <u>County and Municipal Government in North Carolina</u> (2025 edition). <u>This blog post</u> explains the role of town administrator, in particular.

Meeting Types

That brings us to the final "issue" raised in this litigation. The minutes describe the January 4 meeting of the board as an "emergency special-called" meeting. The Open Meetings Law, though, describes only three, distinct types of local government meetings: (1) regular (G.S. 160A-71(a)); (2) special (G.S. 160A-71(b)); and (3) emergency (G.S. 143-318.12(b)(f)). The type of meeting dictates its notice requirements and, in some cases, limits the items available for discussion. An emergency meeting, for example, may be held only to address "generally unexpected circumstances that require immediate consideration by the public body," and only matters meeting this standard may be discussed at the meeting. G.S. 143-318.12(b)(3), (f). This article provides a detailed overview of our open meetings law requirements. It is not clear from the record in the Lucama case whether the January 4 meeting of the board was, in fact, called as a special or emergency meeting or whether it was called or noticed in accordance with the Open Meetings Law.

Conclusion

As of the publication of this post, no notice of appeal has been filed in the Lucama case. Stay tuned

to see whether our appellate courts will have the opportunity to weigh in on issues raised by the case: To what extent may a city council act to limit a mayor's powers after an election? May supplemental powers enacted by ordinance be modified by resolution? What does it mean to designate the mayor as "chief executive officer"? For the Lucama board, time will tell whether it seeks to cement the changes drafted in the resolutions by some other board action or local act of the General Assembly.

This blog post is published and posted online by the School of Government for educational purposes. For more information, visit the School's website at www.sog.unc.edu.

Coates Canons

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Diane Miller

From: NC League of Municipalities <learning@nclm.org>

Sent: Thursday, August 21, 2025 3:47 PM **To:** manager@townoforiental.com

Subject: Learning and Development Newsletter | August 2025

Follow Up Flag: Follow up Flag Status: Flagged



NCLM Learning and Development Newsletter | August 2025

In this newsletter....

- Reduced Rate Workshops and No-Cost Trainings
- Fall 2025 Education Schedule
- Your AML Certification Totals
- AML Certification Information



Reduced Rate Workshops and No-Cost Trainings

Thanks to support from NCLM's Municipal Accounting Services unit, the League is proud to announce that two workshops will be available at a reduced rate for North Carolina municipalities.

- For the **Small Town Strategic Planning** workshop, town-wide registration (which includes admission for five participants) has been reduced from \$800 to \$500.
- For the **Local Government Budgeting** workshop, individual registration has been reduced from \$125 to \$75.

For all NCLM members, the following courses are free:

- Advancing Economic Mobility in Your Community: A Webinar from NLC
- Municipal Finance Webinar Series
- Commit to Civility

For members of NCLM's Workers' Compensation and Property & Liability insurance pools, the following courses are **free**:

- HR 101: A Comprehensive Overview of Municipal Employee Management
- HR 201: Performance Management Workshop
- Cyber Security 101: Understanding the Threat and Protecting Your Town

Visit the registration pages linked in the calendar below to learn more.



The State of Public Budgeting Report 2025:

How Public Finance Teams Are Leading
Through Uncertainty

eunasolutions.com

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Al and the Future of Public Budgeting

Key
Learnings

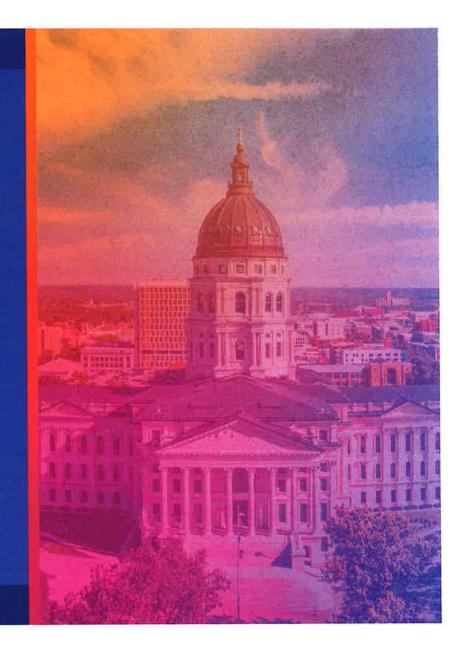
Executive Summary

Budgeting is never easy for public sector finance leaders, and today, it's even harder. Federal funding is uncertain, COVID-era relief programs are ending, and inflation continues to strain budgets. At the same time, communities are expecting more: better services, more transparency, and a greater voice in how their tax dollars are used.

Yet finance teams are being asked to deliver on these expectations with fewer staff, aging technology, and constantly changing regulations. While many are working hard to adapt, there's still a significant opportunity to close the gap.

In the thick of these challenges, digital budgeting tools provide critical support. By automating and streamlining core functions like forecasting, reporting and compliance tracking, these platforms allow finance teams to remain agile while easing the burden on limited staff. However, adoption of digital tools is not yet widespread.

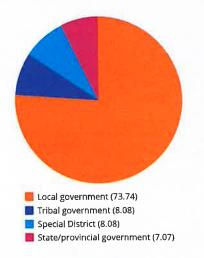
Based on survey results collected from 100 government finance professionals nationwide, this report from Euna Solutions® reflects the voices of those working every day behind the scenes to keep their communities thriving—and the strategies, tools, and mindsets shaping the future of public budgeting.



Report Background: Participant Insights

To understand the current landscape of public sector budgeting, it helps to know who's actually doing the work. Insights were gathered from finance professionals across various types of government, budget sizes, and team structures. Here's a representation of survey respondents:

74% of Respondents Represent Local Government



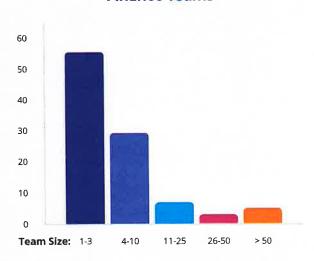
Local agencies often shoulder the most complex service delivery while balancing tight fiscal constraints.

Budgets Vary Widely, But the Mid-Range Dominates



Most respondents operate in the under \$50M range, underscoring how many finance teams manage lean budgets, often without the resources or tech of larger counterparts.

Small But Mighty Finance Teams



Most public sector budget teams operate with limited staff, even while managing multi-million dollar budgets. This challenge is amplified by the 31% of survey respondents who identified staffing and personnel costs as a top concern this year.

A Pivotal Moment for Public Sector Budgeting

Across the public sector, finance leaders are navigating a perfect storm: workforce shortages, shrinking revenues, rising expectations for transparency, and the increasing urgency to do more with less. Many are reassessing how budgets are built, managed, and communicated. This survey reveals the top challenges that public sector finance leaders are facing, (budget cuts, aligning budgets with strategic plans, accurate revenue forecasting) and key areas in which they are focusing on to address these challenges.

The evolution of budgeting in the public sector isn't just about efficiency, it's about redefining how government delivers on its mission in a rapidly changing world.

TOP 3 CHALLENGES

49%

Budget cuts & shortfalls

37%

Aligning budgets with strategic plans

32%

Accurate revenue forecasting

Notably, nearly 31% of respondents expressed concerns with managing personnel costs and staffing levels.

TOP 3 PRIORITIES

64%

Improve operational efficiency

48%

Strengthen reporting & transparency

47%

Prepare for revenue declines or potential fiscal cliffs

Embracing Digital Tools in Budgeting

A striking 39% of public finance teams still rely primarily on spreadsheets to manage budgets—a method that often limits collaboration, slows reporting, and increases the risk of errors. As budgeting grows more complex and expectations rise, this heavy reliance on manual tools presents a clear risk and a missed opportunity.

Digital platforms offer a more scalable, transparent, and efficient path forward. While some teams have adopted ERP systems (16.49%) and general accounting software (17.53%), the transition to purpose-built software solutions designed to support the budget workflow remains far from widespread. The sector stands at a turning point, where accelerating this shift is essential for building more agile, informed, and trusted finance operations.

For example, modern approaches like digital budget books make it easier for agencies to clearly share financial priorities and engage residents in more meaningful ways. By improving how information is communicated, these tools help strengthen transparency, foster public trust, and create lasting community impact.



94% Believe it's Important to Engage the Community in the Budget Process

Public engagement in budgeting is a clear priority for today's finance leaders. But when it comes to how governments actually share budget information, there's still work to do.

Most agencies are still using traditional tools like PDFs or printed reports to communicate financial data. This reveals a critical gap between intent and execution. While these formats check the box for compliance, they aren't easy for the average resident to read, explore, or understand. If residents can't easily access or interpret the data, meaningful engagement becomes difficult.

Digital budget books help close this gap. By making complex financial data easier to navigate and share, they transform budgeting from a compliance-driven task into a transparent, community-centered process. For agencies aiming to strengthen trust and participation, these tools are a direct path forward.





An Agile Response to Inflation

Inflation continues to challenge public sector agencies, driving up costs across the board. Survey respondents identified three areas hit hardest:



Employee wages



Infrastructure & capital projects



Procurement of goods & services

Despite these pressures, finance teams are responding with resilience. They're deploying practical strategies to manage rising costs:

73%

reducing elective spending

55%

focusing on highimpact projects 52%

pursuing alternative funding sources

These responses highlight a shift toward more agile and data-informed budgeting to stay ahead of inflationary challenges.

Scenario Planning: A Smart Defense Against Revenue Volatility

Local governments are facing increasing uncertainty around revenue. Over half of respondents reported:

57%

experiencing intergovernmental funding reductions

55%

navigating the effects of broader economic instability

This climate makes long-term planning more difficult—and more important—than ever.

ENTER SCENARIO PLANNING

Once a niche practice, scenario planning is now a critical budgeting tool. It allows finance leaders to:

- · Simulate different financial outcomes
- Test assumptions and stress budgets
- Prepare contingencies before a crisis hits

More than 55% of survey respondents now use scenario planning in their budgeting process—a number expected to grow with the adoption of modern digital tools.



Where Scenario Planning Makes the Biggest Impact

Scenario planning helps agencies model the financial impact of different outcomes across all major budget areas:



Personnel Budgets

Plan for staffing changes—whether it's freezes, furloughs, or expansion—based on revenue scenarios.



Capital Budgets

Prioritize projects that are most resilient under economic stress or revenue changes.



Operating Budgets

Identify the best opportunities for cost-cutting or investment that have minimal disruption.

How Technology Enhances Scenario Planning

Modern government technology platforms are making scenario planning easier and more effective:

01. Centralized Data Access

Cloud-based systems bring together revenue and expenditure data in one place.

02. Built-In Forecasting

Automated tools simulate multiple budget outcomes from just a few inputs.

03. Collaborative Workflows

Teams across departments can work together in real time within a shared platform.

04. Interactive Dashboards

Visual tools make it easy to compare scenarios and guide better, faster decisions.

05. Audit-Ready Documentation

Every version and assumption is automatically tracked for full transparency.



Confidence in Achieving Results Remains Strong

Despite the headwinds, a sense of quiet confidence runs through the responses. **Nearly 80 percent** of survey participants expressed optimism about their ability to achieve budgetary goals for the year. This conviction appears grounded not in luck, but in preparation.

While fiscal conditions remain unpredictable, it's clear that public sector agencies aren't just absorbing setbacks but actively responding with a clear sense of mission and momentum.

Many are guided by a deep commitment to serving their communities and increasingly, by the recognition that the right tools and technology can help them do more with less.

Confidence in Achieving Budgetary Goals



Al and the Future of Public Budgeting

Artificial intelligence (AI) is emerging as a transformative force in public budgeting. Once limited to the private sector, AI is now becoming a practical tool for government finance teams—offering new ways to plan smarter, operate more efficiently, and strengthen community trust. According to Gartner*, government AI spending is growing at a 19% CAGR, expected to outpace all other sectors by 2025, while McKinsey & Company** reports that governments are actively piloting AI to automate services and improve outcomes.

Al will offer meaningful support to key challenges like staffing shortages (30% of survey respondents noted this). By automating tasks like forecasting, narrative drafting, and data analysis, Al will help lean teams save time, reduce manual errors, and focus on higher-value work. It empowers agencies to make faster, more informed decisions even amid tight resources and shifting economic conditions.

Looking ahead, Al won't replace public sector expertise—it will amplify it. Whether surfacing data-driven budget recommendations, answering plain-language questions from staff and residents, or analyzing public feedback, Al will help governments operate with greater agility, transparency, and responsiveness.

Use Cases for Al in Budgeting



Strategic Planning

Al will deliver real-time forecasting, scenario modeling, and workforce planning insights to help leaders navigate uncertainty with confidence.



Budget Formulation

Al will streamline budget development by suggesting allocations, identifying anomalies, and answering questions in plain language.



Reporting & Transparency

Al will enhance public engagement through smart narratives, interactive budget chats, and analysis of community feedback.

Key Learnings

The challenges facing public sector budget teams aren't going away. Inflation, staffing shortages, and growing demands for transparency are making it harder to do more with less. But amidst the pressure, one thing is clear:

Technology is no longer optional — it's the only sustainable way forward.

Agencies that embrace digital tools are gaining the visibility, control, and efficiency needed to stay resilient. From scenario planning to interactive budget books, modern solutions are helping teams not just keep up, but get ahead.

The opportunity isn't just to respond to today's challenges — it's to rethink how budgeting can work altogether. The public sector deserves tools that are as dynamic as the communities it serves. And with the right technology, that's exactly what's possible.



A Solution for Smarter Public Budgeting

Euna Solutions® is a leading provider of purpose-built, cloud-based software that helps public sector and government organizations streamline procurement, budgeting, payments, grants management, and special education administration. Part of Euna's suite of solutions, Euna Budget is a full-cycle budgeting solution purpose-built for governments and public sector organizations. From budget formulation and management to publishing award-winning budget books, Euna Budget streamlines every stage of the budgeting process—enhancing efficiency, collaboration, and confidence across teams. With unmatched configurability, robust security, and the industry's most experienced implementation and customer success teams, Euna Budget empowers organizations to align resources with strategic priorities and deliver measurable impact. Trusted by over 3,400 public agencies, Euna Solutions supports smarter decisions and stronger communities.

See for yourself how Euna's Full-Cycle Financial Suite can help your agency best position your finances for community impact.

Book A Demo





Flex Billing Statement

August 1, 2025 - August 31, 2025

This statement details the monthly revenue generated by your ChargePoint electric vehicle charging stations.

Organization: Town of Oriental, NC
Group: Organization Default
Remittance ID: NA007171FB16341

All amount stated in U.S. Dollars (USD)

Net Session Fee (price set by host)	\$85,00
plus Excise Tax (excise tax paid by host)	\$0.00
plus Sales Tax (Sales Tax paid by ChargePoint)	\$0.00
plus Other Taxes (fee tax set and paid by host)	\$0.00
Gross Amount (Net Session Fee + taxes)	\$85.00
less Flex Billing Service Fee (ChargePoint fee for Flex Billing service)	-\$8.50
less Sales Tax	-\$0.00
Payout Amount (amount paid to the host inc excise tax)	\$76.50

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ChargePoint, Inc. 254 East Hacienda Avenue | Campbell, CA 95008 USA chargepoint.com

Accounts Payable : flexbilling@chargepoint.com

Station Name	Pricing Rule Name	Transaction Type	Transaction ID	Start Time	End Time	TZ	Energy (kWh)	Transaction Date (PT)	Net Session Fee	Excise Tax	Sales Tax	Other Taxes	Gross Amount	Flex Billing Service Fee	Payout Amount
ORIENTAL S1 ORIENTAL MARINA	All Chargers	Session	4360764601	2025-08-25 17:58:38	2025-08-25 20:16:08	EDT	12.637	2025-08-25 17:17:08	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 ORIENTAL MARINA	All Chargers	Session	4362379721	2025-08-26 09:27:24	2025-08-26 10:29:15	EDT	7.444	2025-08-26 07:30:12	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4362337521	2025-08-26 09:10:10	2025-08-26 10:41:22	EDT	10.982	2025-08-26 07:42:12	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 ORIENTAL MARINA	All Chargers	Session	4362969571	2025-08-26 12:25:45	2025-08-27 07:06:59	EDT	58.535	2025-08-27 04:08:03	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 ORIENTAL MARINA	All Chargers	Session	4367661961	2025-08-27 21:07:29	2025-08-27 23:23:18	EDT	16,300	2025-08-27 20:24:10	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4367603801	2025-08-27 20:52:54	2025-08-28 09:06:07	EDT	40.140	2025-08-28 06:07:00	\$5.00	\$0,00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 ORIENTAL MARINA	All Chargers	Session	4370580001	2025-08-28 19:27:34	2025-08-28 20:07:43	EDT	4,599	2025-08-28 17:08:22	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50

Station Name	Pricing Rule Name	Transaction Type	Transaction ID	Start Time	End Time	TZ	Energy (kWh)	Transaction Date (PT)	Net Session Fee	Excise Tax	Sales Tax	Other Taxes	Gross Amount	Flex Billing Service Fee	Payout Amount
ORIENTAL S1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4371369991	2025-08-29 00:17:58	2025-08-29 08:51:28	EDT	50,736	2025-08-29 05:52:08	\$5,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0.00	\$5,00	\$0,50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4373494371	2025-08-29 18:23:02	2025-08-29 20:33:00	EDT	15,955	2025-08-29 17:33:44	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4373840891	2025-08-29 20:38:34	2025-08-30 07:13:14	EDT	49,994	2025-08-30 04:13:54	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0,50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4374856751	2025-08-30 09:53:17	2025-08-30 10:22:30	EDT	3_549	2025-08-30 07:23:09	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0,50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL \$1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4375538771	2025-08-30 15:49:54	2025-08-30 18:39:26	EDT	20.824	2025-08-30 15:40:29	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0,00	\$5,00	\$0,50	\$4,50
ORIENTAL S1 ORIENTAL MARINA	All Chargers	Session	4374913731	2025-08-30 10:30:53	2025-08-31 07:45:46	EDT	111.412	2025-08-31 04:46:28	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0,00	\$5,00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4376986591	2025-08-31 09:56:32	2025-08-31 13:38:15	EDT	21.184	2025-08-31 10:39:00	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 ORIENTAL MARINA	All Chargers	Session	4377113691	2025-08-31 10:42:35	2025-08-31 14:55:30	EDT	26.925	2025-08-31 11:57:02	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0,50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4377376831	2025-08-31 13:58:07	2025-08-31 16:13:14	EDT	16.598	2025-08-31 13:14:02	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.50	\$4.50
ORIENTAL S1 TOWN HALL	All Chargers	Session	4377723611	2025-08-31 16:57:01	2025-08-31 20:16:18	EDT	9.225	2025-08-31 17:17:28	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,00	\$0.50	\$4.50
								Total	\$85.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$85.00	\$8.50	\$76.50

THE ADMINISTRATOR

SHEPHERD ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Has served as Executive Director of NCCCMA since 2012.

After a distinguished career spanning nearly four decades in public service, Rob Shepherd announced his retirement as Executive Director of the North Carolina City & County Management Association (NCCCMA), effective June 30, 2026.

Shepherd has served as the Secretariat/Executive Director of NCCCMA since 2012, guiding the association through a period of transition, growth, innovation and strengthened partnerships. His leadership has been marked by a deep commitment to ethical governance, professional development and the advancement of city and county management across North Carolina.

Shepherd' career began in 1987 as Town Manager of Walkertown, where he served until 1990. He then became Assistant Manager and Human Resources Officer for the Town of Kernersville, a role he held until 1996. His dedication to supporting municipalities led him to the N.C. League of Municipalities, where he served as Member Services Representative (1996–2005), Director of Member Services (2005–2016)

and Assistant Director of Business & Member Development (2016–2019).

In 2019, Shepherd joined the UNC School of Government as Partnership Manager, continuing his mission to connect and empower local government professionals through education and collaboration.



"It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve the members of NCCCMA," he said. "I've been inspired daily by the dedication and integrity of our local government professionals. As I prepare to step away, I do so with immense pride in what we've accomplished together and full confidence in the future of the association."

As NCCCMA begins the process of selecting its next Executive Director, Shepherd will continue to support a smooth transition and ensure the continued success of the association's mission.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

Nominations open for NCLM, NCCCMA & ICMA positions.

As we approach the end of the year, several key leadership opportunities are opening for members of the North Carolina City & County Management Association (NCCCMA). These include nominations for the NCLM Board of Directors, the ICMA Southeast Regional Vice

President, and the NCCCMA Executive Committee.

These roles offer a unique opportunity to represent North Carolina at both the state and national levels, contribute to strategic decisionmaking, and support the advancement of ethical and effective local government leadership.

Why You Should Consider Serving

ICMA Southeast Regional Vice President

Represent North Carolina and neighboring states on the ICMA Executive Board. This role includes attending regional and national meetings and serving as a liaison between ICMA and local government professionals. While ICMA has not yet released its official timeline, nominations typically open in **October**, with a submission deadline in **early January**. Interested members are encouraged to begin exploring the responsibilities and expectations of this position. This is a three-year term beginning in 2026.

NCLM Board of Directors

Help guide the League's advocacy, member services, and strategic initiatives. This year's open seat is for the Central/Piedmont region, defined as the area between I-77 and I-95. The seat is currently held by Tasha Logan Ford, City Manager of High Point. There is ongoing discussion about whether these regional boundaries should be reevaluated, given the concentration of managers in the central region. Term begins in April 2016.

NCCCMA Executive Committee

Play a vital role in shaping the direction of our association. This year, there is a particular emphasis on restoring **county representation** on the Executive Committee, following recent resignations and job changes that have shifted the balance toward municipal leadership. Terms begin in June 2026.

Get Involved

Members interested in nominating themselves or others for any of these roles are encouraged to complete a Nomination Form on or before September 30th. Questions about any of the nomination process or any of the positions, please contact Rob Shepherd, shepherd@sog.unc.edu or 919-962-4252.

This year's Nominating Committee includes:

- Mary Furtado, County Manager, Catawba County (Chair)
- Elton Daniels, City Manager, City of Rocky Mount
- Michael Peoples, City Manager, City of Gastonia

NEW AI CHATBOT

Offers an easier way to navigate.

We're excited to announce that a new AI-powered chatbot is now available on the NCCCMA website, offering members and visitors a faster, easier way to find information and navigate resources.

Developed by Polimorphic, this tool has already proven successful in several North Carolina local governments, including Craven County, Rowan County, Polk County, and Watauga County, as well as the cities of Greenville and Lowell.

Key Benefits:

• 24/7 Support: Get immediate answers to questions using natural language.

- Streamlined Navigation: Quickly locate documents, contacts, and event details.
- Secure and Reliable: Uses only NCCCMA website content to ensure accurate responses.

NCCCMA is especially **grateful to Polimorphic**, an annual sponsor of NCCCMA, for providing this valuable resource **at no cost** to the association. Their generosity and commitment to supporting local government innovation are deeply appreciated.

Visit www.ncmanagers.org and try it out today!

REMAINING ICMA COACHING WEBINARS FOR 2025

Still lots of training opportunities left this year.

There are three remaining "live" ICMA Coaching Webinars available for 2025, listed below. All webinars are 90 minutes and will begin at 1:30 p.m. ET.

September 17: New Job Overnight: How to Make the Successful Transition

October 15: Your Carcer, Your Compass: Proactive Career Development Strategies

November 17: Workforce Revolution: Trends
Transforming the Workforce and What You Can't
Afford to Overlook

To register for the webinars individually, please click on any of the links above. To register for ALL remaining webinars, click <u>HERE</u>.

ICMA Coaching Program webinars give local government professionals of all career stages the

opportunity to bolster skills and learn about new and leading practices, strategies, tactics, developing issues, and trends in the profession of local government management. Participation in free coaching webinars also qualifies for ICMA-CM (Voluntary Credentialing Program) credit.

NCCCMA is an ICMA State Coaching Program Partner which makes all ICMA Coaching resources available to NCCCMA members and members of their staff free of charge. Please feel free to share this information with anyone in your organization. Please note that non-ICMA members are required to create a free ICMA account to view the ICMA Coaching Webinars.

To learn more about the ICMA Coaching resources including access to all previous coaching webinars, please click <u>HERE</u>.

JOIN US AT THE ICMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NCCCMA offering a reception and dinner.

Heading to the ICMA Annual Conference in Tampa? Be sure to mark your calendar for the NCCCMA Reception and Dinner on the evening of Monday, October 27. This year's gathering will take place at American Social Bar & Kitchen, located just a few blocks from the convention center.

This is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues from across North Carolina in a relaxed and welcoming setting. Additional details will be shared as the date approaches.

We look forward to seeing you there!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: BEAGAN PARSONS

Our "Member Spotlight" offers a glimpse into the personalities and lives of you – the N.C. City & County Management Association member. Our "Member Spotlight" this month features Southern Pines Town Manager Reagan Parsons.



Birthplace? New Lexington, Ohio.

Any siblings? Younger brother Ryan, now a licensed architect in Cleveland. We were close but competitive raised in a home with high expectations. With names historically tied to "Prince/Little king" (Ryan -Irish, Reagan – Norse/Viking) as sons of Rex (king – Latin) it was a loving mother that kept things sane!

Favorite vacation spot? The next one. Currently that means the Kenya Safari/Uganda Gorilla Trek I am about to embark on.

Favorite hobby? Cooking. It's my artistic outlet and my wife would tell you any given night might turn into a "Chopped" episode involving whatever happens to be in my chest freezer, garden and pantry that evening. My favorite pastime is travel, particularly to places I've never been. Having done very little of it until my twenties, my mother would tell you I'm a gypsy at heart.

Childhood dream job? Genetic Engineer. I wanted to cure the world until the realization that bureaucracy would always be in the way.



Favorite Quote? "Knowing vourself is the beginning of all wisdom" - Aristotle.

First local government job? Technically, I suppose lifeguard at age 15, but was appointed the first CAO in Wintersville, OH, following a Charter amendment three months out of graduate school September 1994. Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder's half-brother John Synodinos was on my first Council.

Western or Eastern BBQ? Texas Beef, Memphis Ribs, and whether Eastern or Western Carolina Pork the sauce had better have some heat. I love it all.

Mountains, beach or Piedmont? Mountains, they remind me of the area I worked hard as a youth to "escape" and have grown now to appreciate in many ways.

Favorite local government hero? My (eventual) Father-in-Law William Knight was a longtime COG Director in northern Ohio, Michigan and eventually Vermont and part of my internship with his COG involved visiting managers throughout his region. That led me to switch from Hospital and Health Care Administration to Local Government Management midway through my MPA. Dr. Craig Ramsey, a professor at Ohio Wesleyan, first interested me in declaring Pre-Public Admin. as a second major to supplement Politics and Government and an Economics Minor. ... If you haven't worked outside of North Carolina, you can't fully appreciate how good it really is for the profession in this State.

BLUESTEIN PASSES AWAY

Taught Local Elected Officials Ethics course for many years.

The UNC School of Government is saddened to share the news of the passing of former faculty member Frayda Bluestein. Bluestein joined the Institute of Government in 1991 and served as a trusted member of the faculty for three decades.

In her prolific career at the School, Bluestein established herself as one of North Carolina's most relied upon and valued experts on governmental structure and powers, conflicts of interest, and transparency laws. Her work and expertise stretched to every corner of the state and equipped local government officials with the skills and knowledge they needed to maintain trust and credibility with the communities they serve.

"If you were lucky enough to have had the opportunity to know her, you would have seen that she was a brilliant lawyer and teacher, as well as an incredibly kind, supportive and patient person," said School of Government Dean Aimee Wall wrote in a note to her colleagues. "I loved Frayda - she was one of my best friends and she was an amazing mentor."

After graduating from UC Berkeley and completing the first two years of law school at UC Davis, she moved from California to North Carolina with her husband, John Cullen. She finished her last year of law school at UNC, where she had the good fortune to take a local government law course with Professor Judith Wegner. She was hooked. She joined a small firm with a strong local government and land use law practice, where she loved working alongside Bob Hagemann and learning from Mike Brough. She left the firm and worked at the General Assembly for a short while before ultimately joining the Institute of Government



in September 1991 as an Assistant Professor. She specialized in public purchasing, contracting, and conflicts of interest and worked closely with the legendary Jake Wicker and David Lawrence. Over the years, Frayda's role expanded and evolved into more of a local government law generalist and she ultimately became the goto expert on public records, open meetings, and First Amendment issues affecting local government. She also loved teaching Legal Issues in State and Local Government for our MPA students.

"Our public official students trusted her and adored her - just like her colleagues did," wrote Wall. "Shortly after Whitney Afonso joined the faculty, she surveyed her faculty colleagues to find out who they turned to for guidance and advice. She shared her findings at a faculty meeting and absolutely no one was surprised to see that Frayda was the big red dot in the middle of the SOG faculty network analysis. We all looked to Frayda for legal guidance, career advice, editing, and a listening car. Without question, Frayda was at the heart of our faculty and our organization as a whole for many, many years. She cared about and served this organization with intensity, candor, and generosity. She directed the summer law clerk program, chaired the faculty recruiting committee, served as Associate Dean for Faculty Development for over ten years, and volunteered for every committee she could."

During her career, she was a fixture in several of the School's flagship courses that educated thousands of public officials, including Municipal and County Administration, Essentials of Municipal Government, the Municipal Attorneys Winter Conference, and Ethics for Elected Officials. In her name, the School launched the Frayda S. Bluestein Scholarship Fund for the Municipal and County Administration course. This gift-endowed scholarship

provides funding to public officials wishing to attend the course and gives first preference to those whose participation is, in part, dependent upon financial support.

Her expertise was regularly sought by state and national media outlets in matters related to transparency, public records, open meeting laws, and First Amendment issues affecting public bodies. Bluestein wrote extensively on local government authority, and her published scholarship is considered a source of record by officials across the state—and beyond.

To honor her expertise and service, Bluestein's time on the School of Government faculty was, to no one's surprise, met with many distinguished awards—one of which became her namesake:

- Albert and Gladys Coates Term Professor for Outstanding Junior Faculty Achievement (Institute of Government; 1998)
- Albert and Gladys Coates Term Professorship for Teaching Excellence (School of Government; 2004)
- David Lawrence Distinguished Professorship (School of Government; 2014)
- Grainger Barrett Award for Excellence, Government and Public Sector Section (North Carolina Bar Association; 2016)
- Ernest H. Ball Award for Excellence in Municipal Law (North Carolina Association of Municipal Attorneys; 2016). This award was renamed the Ernest H. Ball and Frayda S. Bluestein Award (2021).
- Edward Kidder Graham Faculty Service Award (UNC-Chapel Hill; 2022)

Bluestein's contributions to the School's faculty cannot be overstated. She served more than a decade as the School's associate dean for faculty development and was a mentor and friend to many of her faculty peers. Upon her retirement announcement, one colleague described her as "the heart and soul of the School."

In 2021—as she entered phased retirement from her distinguished faculty tenure—she reflected on what brought her to the School of Government.

"What drew me to this work is that it's interesting, it affects people in so many ways, and it's so practical, "she said. "Academia isn't always practical. At the School, we get to work with people who are in government, but we also help people understand how government works and help people in government make it work well for its community members. I believe in that."

"Outside of the School, Frayda had a rich and fulfilling life," Wall wrote. "She grew up in a very musical family and was a gifted singer, guitar player, and clogger. Just google *The Bluestein Family* for some amazing songs, videos, and history of the band. She and John welcomed their daughter, Rachel, in 2000. If you ever wanted to see Frayda's face light up and her eyes twinkle, you would just ask her about Rachel. Her family was her true love and her heartbeat."

THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Administrator is a monthly newsletter of the N.C. City & County Management Association, a professional association of city and county managers and assistant managers from counties and municipalities throughout the state of North Carolina.

For comments or suggestions, please contact the editor, Matt Lail at 919-819-3979, or email collards12@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2026 NCCCMA Winter Seminar

January 28-30, 2026 Winston-Salem

2026 NCCCMA Summer Seminar

June 25-27, 2026 Asheville

MEMBERS IN TRANSITION

If you are looking to keep up with your colleagues in the profession, be sure to check out the Members in Transition

www.ncmanagers.org/page/M anagerInTransitionReports

BULLYING & HARRASSMENT IS A COMMUNITY PROBLEM

The effects are real and dangerous - to employees the public and beyond.

By Jaime Laughter, County Manager, Transylvania County

Something is breaking in the heart of local government. Across towns, cities, and counties, public servants—the very people responsible for keeping our communities running every day, every week, every month and every year—are facing growing and insidious threats: bullying, harassment, and abuse on the job.

These are not isolated incidents. From clerks and code enforcement officers to public health workers and city/county managers, local government employees are increasingly reporting harassment not only from the public they serve, but also from elected officials or even colleagues. The effects are real and they're dangerous to employee well-being, to public trust, and to the long-term health of our communities.

Impact on Staff

One of the clearest signs of the damage is in the recruitment and retention crisis many local governments are now facing. Talented professionals are leaving public service. Potential candidates are thinking twice about pursuing a career that seems to mean accepting that abuse as part of the job. In many local governments, vacancy rates are climbing while applicant pools are shrinking. Local government is largely person-to-person services that don't happen if there isn't someone willing to fill the job. And it's not just about wages or benefits motivating the exodusworkers are fleeing local government career fields seeking psychological safety and the expectation of basic respect in the workplace and in the communities where they live. Who wants to work in an environment where threats are shrugged off, angry words elevate into a lack of personal safety, public meetings have become arenas for intimidation, and social media campaigns target staff by name?

The cost of this growing toxic public work culture is steep. Workers are facing personal impacts like increased anxiety, burnout, and even PTSD on top of the known mental health impacts already inherent in

many public service careers. Local governments are also paying more in turnover costs, recruitment strategies, and the loss of institutional knowledge costing tax payers more to maintain the same levels of service. Training a new employee can cost tens of thousands of dollars. When seasoned staff leave, they take years of expertise with them, leaving governments less effective, less responsive, and less cost-efficient.

Respect

Let's be clear: this is not about shielding government employees from criticism or accountability. Public servants should and do expect scrutiny. But there's a line between free speech and abuse and that line is increasingly being crossed, often by the very public they are trying to serve.

It's time for communities to take a hard look at the climate this trend has created and exacerbated with social media. What happens when even increasing pay isn't enough for workers to subject themselves to the personal impacts we are seeing? Will it take no answer on the other end of the line when we dial 911 or when there isn't a social worker to check in on a neglected child to open our eyes? That reality could be closer than we think if we don't start supporting our public workers with the same seriousness we expect in their performance.

Respect should not be negotiable. We all know toxicity drives good people away, and when that happens, the entire community suffers. Safe, respectful workplaces aren't a luxury. They're the foundation of good government.

The ability for local government employees to enjoy non-work time in their own community without personal attacks keeps the backbone of our civic lives strong.

I come from two generations before me that committed their lives to public service and I have carried that family legacy for 25 years myself. I married into the same family culture. Serving others is practically in our DNA, yet we've found ourselves

fearing our children may follow these career paths and where they may be headed. In my worst fears, that they would be victim to escalating violence that seemingly softer forms of bullying precede if they did.

Endgame?

Growing up and working, I've witnessed the frequency and intensity of attacks on public employees grow. Somehow it has become acceptable to launch personal barbs in every public comment, on social media, and even from seated elected officials—dealing unsubstantiated accusations, derogatory criticism, persecution without due process, and then expecting workers to show up on time and unphased the next day for another round. Public servants are becoming our whipping posts for anger over anything we don't

like—taxes, lack of immediate satisfaction, or partisanship when it doesn't align with our own partisan ideology. Ironically, these are all things that will get worse if the workforce evaporates and there is no one there to punish or serve.

I don't pretend that this issue is going to be easy to navigate. In many ways, this is a byproduct of larger cultural shifts that justify uncivil behavior instead of correcting it or a desensitization to empathy from behind a keyboard. My concern is that if we don't figure out how to address it for our public workers—through policies, education, or advocacy—the backbone of our communities that often gets taken for granted anyway will erode and disappear and the integrity and nobility of public service lost with it.

NOW'S THE TIME TO JOIN

Join ICMA - and attend the ICMA Annual Conference!

Starting June 25, 2025 and ending October 25, 2025, the JOIN, GO AND SAVE offer allows new ICMA members to maximize their savings with 50% off a first-year membership fee* and attend the ICMA Annual Conference at the member rate.

Save 50% on a first-year membership fee to join ICMA* A savings of up to \$700!

*This special offer applies to new members only. Offer ends October 25, 2025. Not valid for reinstatements or renewals.

Attend the Annual Conference at the ICMA Member Rate! The best value rate for ICMA Members is \$890. The best value rate for nonmembers is \$1,790. After September 17, the regular registration rate for ICMA members increases to \$980; for nonmembers, \$1,960.

Becoming an ICMA Member gives you access to dozens of membership benefits throughout the year and you'll join a community of like-minded professionals at the ICMA Annual Conference, where there is a wide range of opportunities for you to engage with the people who "speak your

language" and face the same challenges day-to-day that you do.

ICMA membership is the professional community you need for the community that needs you. The ICMA Conference is the most visible platform for understanding the value of ICMA, but your annual membership offers ongoing learning and networking opportunities that benefit your career, your community, and the local government management profession.

Because we want you to consider a longer-term investment in your career and your community, we'll offer you half-off your first-year dues if you join ICMA as a member today, as well as extend the registration discounts offered exclusively to ICMA members.

Benefits of Attending the ICMA Annual Conference:

• Inspirational keynote speakers with diverse backgrounds and expertise

- New tools and techniques presented by experts in the local government management profession
- Networking opportunities with local government professionals from around the world
- Join, Go, and Save! Special Discount for New Members Only

During the event, you will experience the best of ICMA—learn new skills, explore new products

and services and connect with people who will enhance your career. The conference is an exceptional value for members and nonmembers alike.

We hope you Join us in for a one-of-a-kind networking and learning opportunity that thousands of local government managers consistently rate as an exceptional professional development experience not to be missed!

STUDY: N.C. LAGS IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Gaps in civics learning part of the problem.

On a national stage, North Carolina often serves as a state to watch for its purple and swingy political nature. However, its own citizens are opting out of civic engagement at higher rates than most of the country, according to the 2024 Civic Health Index. Ineffective civics education could be part of the problem.

Charlotte Independence High School junior April Alonso knows this firsthand. She struck out the first time she tried getting her fellow students at the Charlotte school to preregister to vote. For her AP Government & Politics class, Alonso had to do a service project. So, she enlisted a group of friends to walk around the cafeteria at lunchtime and get 16- and 17-year olds to pre-register.

They could not have been less interested, she said.

Right now, distractions and disconnect may be winning. According to the 2024 Civic Health Index, North Carolina lags behind most of the country on several key markers of civic engagement.

Turnout in the 2022 midterm elections and voter registration fell short of the national average. North Carolinians regularly discussed political and social issues with friends, families and neighbors less often than in most states. In several areas — participation in public meetings, contacting public

officials and frequent consumption of political news — the state placed in the bottom 10 in the nation.

While there could be a host of reasons for North Carolina's relative disengagement, one factor is at the center of it all: civic education, or the lack thereof.

Civic education teaches students how their government works, and their place in it. If done well, it arms them with the knowledge, confidence and motivation to participate in their local communities, and demonstrates the influence they can have in governmental decision making.

But too often, civic education is pushed to the side to make way for other priorities, and what instruction remains may be watered down to avoid conflict.

In 1997, North Carolina public leaders sensed a looming crisis. They worried that North Carolina's civic education was inadequate, and would lead to a generation of citizens unprepared to lead their communities.

So they worked with the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, within the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Government, to develop a <u>report</u> on the state's civic health.

The report, published in 2003, centered around a phone survey of 800 teens and 800 adults, found that household income was the best predictor of civic engagement. Wealthier adults and students from high-income families were more likely to have worked with others to solve a community issue, discussed political issues at home, contacted public officials and showed interest in voting, among other civic activities.

Two decades later, these patterns persist. White North Carolinians report greater engagement than their Black counterparts in every indicator of civic health besides participation in public meetings. College-educated citizens also surged ahead of citizens with less formal education, and North Carolinians 30 and older reported significantly higher involvement than younger generations.

Education in civics should level the playing field, in theory. But, it isn't. While North Carolina's standards integrate civics into broader social studies instruction beginning in kindergarten, no stand-alone civics course exists until high school.

After the 2021 standards were released, North Carolina earned a <u>failing grade</u> from the conservative educational think tank Fordham Institute, which found the content, rigor, clarity and organization of the standards lacking. The report pulled no punches.

"Grades three and four target state and local government, but not in a way that is likely to promote understanding."

"...the civics standards for (fifth) grade provide dubious guidance."

'Here, again, the standards tease big concepts... but offer nothing concrete."

"Finally, although the inquiry strand includes a category on 'taking informed action,' it is thoroughly uninspiring." ...

The way students are raised by their parents and their communities is an early determinant of their eventual civic engagement. For example, if a student's parents talk about voting, they're more likely to follow in their footsteps. If there's no community culture around participating in local politics, it may feel less important.

But formal education plays a significant role, too.

Civic education may be particularly impactful among certain groups who have fewer opportunities to develop civic skills outside of the classroom. Nearly 30% of students learn about civics only or mostly in schools, according to a 2022 report by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.

White rural youth and Black and Latino men are overrepresented in these groups. On the other hand, urban teens tended to receive higher quality civic education, including media literacy lessons, classroom discussions and service learning opportunities.

Civic education builds a student's concept of the world and their place in society outside of family, said Bryan Proffitt, former high school social studies teacher and vice president of the North Carolina Association of Educators. It is crucial that it doesn't take shortcuts, he said.

If students are able to pass a civics class by reciting the roles of the three branches of government, they're probably not going to be prepared to understand what it means to vote, follow a debate or participate in a school board meeting, Proffitt said. The world isn't "uncomplicated" or "uncontroversial," he said; effective civic education needs to encompass all of its nuance.

"There is an incredibly consequential political decision that is up in the next election," he said. "Do we have a set of people who are able to think for themselves, versus a set of people who are just going to believe whatever propaganda someone foists on them?"

This article was edited for space. <u>Click here to read the</u> full article.



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

4220 MAIL SERVICE CENTER RALEIGH NC 27699

<u>66-1059</u> 531

000045165 Date: 08/25/25

FAYABLE AT PAP TREGUER FEDERAL RESERVE, SYSTEM STATE TREASURER, RALEIGH, NC Void After One Year

PAY

SEVENTY-TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY-NINE AND 25/100

\$72,469.25

TO THE ORDER OF

TOWN OF ORIENTAL PIC BOX 472 ORIENTAL NC 28571

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY 4220 MAIL SERVICE CENTER, RALEIGH NC 27699 000045165

INVOICE AMOUNT	DISC	NET AMOUNT	
\$72,469.25	\$0.00	\$72,469.25	
\$72,469.25	\$0.00	\$72,469.25	
	\$72,469.25	\$72,469.25 \$0.00	



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800.222.2766 tel 214.521.3605 3102 Oak Lawn Avenue Suite 1100

fax 214.279.9915 Dallas, TX 75219-4281

September 3, 2025

VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

Town of Oriental c/o Diane H. Miller 507 Church Street Oriental, NC 28571

Re: 3M Second Payment

Dear Ms. Miller:

enclosures

Enclosed are the following:

- 1 Signed Settlement Statement
- 2-Check

If you have any questions regarding any of this payment or the process, please do not hesitate to contact me or your case manager, Brett Land, bland@baronbudd.com.

Sincerely,

Scott Summy

(24 16735 1)

BARON & BUDD, P.C. ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS 3102 OAK LAWN AVE., #1100 **DALLAS, TEXAS 75219-4281** (214) 521-3605

SETTLEMENT STATEMENT

IN RE: Town of Oriental

Balance Due Claimant

Settlement: 25 15808 - 24 16735 1								
3M Company - 2nd Payment								
Less Common Benefit Assessment (8%) & Attorneys' Fee (17%)* Common Benefit Assessment - Court Ordered Cossich, Sumich, Parsiola & Taylor, LLC Davis Hartman Wright LLP Seagle Law, PLLC Sumrell Sugg, P.A. Ward and Smith, P.A. Baron & Budd, P.C.	1,712.32 1,528.25 145.55 145.55 145.55 145.55 1,528.23	5,351.00						
Less Partial Litigation Expenses Misc. Postage Copies, etc.	9.20							
Sub Total Expenses		9.20						
		4 5 0 40 70						

16,043.78

Client will receive from Attorneys the Balance Due Claimant shown above. Client hereby approves of the distribution of funds as hereinabove set forth, the services of the Attorneys, and the amount and breakdown of attorneys' fee. Client further authorizes Attorneys to disburse the proceeds in accordance with the above

^{*} Attorneys' Fees are equal to the Original Contract Fee % less the Common Benefit Assessment - Court Ordered %

itemization.

A copy of Rule 1.8 of the Louisiana Rules of Professional Conduct is attached. It allows attorneys to advance courts costs and litigation expenses prior to settlement but requires that a copy of the rule be provided at the time of the approval of any settlement statement.

Piane H. Miller

326EAF357D2F492

Town of Oriental

Sep-02-2025

Date