

## UNRBA Board of Directors: November 19, 2025, Board Minutes

The Board of Directors of the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) met at 9:30 A.M. on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, via an in-person and conference call/webinar. Meeting attendees are listed below.

Name	Affiliation
Wendy Jacobs (Chair)	Durham County
Jane Harrison (Vice Chair)	City of Raleigh
Ryan Eaves (Treasurer)	Durham County
Russ May (Secretary)	Granville County
Forrest Westall (Executive Director)	UNRBA
Reggie Hicks	City of Durham
Carl Rist	City of Durham
Michelle Woolfolk	City of Durham
David Harris	Durham County Soil & Water
Wesley Poole	Orange County
Marilyn Carter	Orange County
Nish Trivedi	Person County
Chris Summerlin	SGWASA
Vicky Daniels	Town of Butner
Terry Hackett	Town of Hillsborough
Tim Karan	Town of Stem
Katie Cromwell	Upper Jurisdictions
Jennifer Tavantzis	Upper Jurisdictions
Alix Matos	Brown & Caldwell
Dan McLawhorn	DFM Law Office
John Huisman	DWR
Kieu Tran*	City of Durham
Sandi Wilbur*	City of Durham
Ed Buchan*	City of Raleigh
Carolyn Bachl*	City of Raleigh
Kathy Cooper*	City of Raleigh
Dustin Brewer*	Durham County
Barry Baker*	Granville County
James Bryan*	Orange County
Sherry Wilborn*	Person County
Jennifer Ganser*	Town of Butner
Meaghun Darab*	Town of Hillsborough
Nick Nolte*	Town of Wake Forest
Nancy Daly*	Wake County
Don Mial*	Wake County
Haywood Phthisic*	Haywood Phthisic
Donna Myers*	American Rivers
Lauren Strader*	Brown & Caldwell

\*Attended meeting virtually

## **Welcome and Recognition**

The Chair, Wendy Jacobs, called the meeting to order and welcomed all those participating. Wendy asked if any of the Board Directors have any “conflict of interest” issues with any agenda items, and no conflicts were identified. The Chair called the roll, and 12 of 14 members were present for a quorum. The Chair asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Being none, Marilyn Carter made the motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Jane Harrison, and approved by the Board.

## **Initial Action Items of the UNRBA Board**

*Approval of Minutes, October 21, 2025, Board Meeting* – The Chair asked the Board if there were any edits or corrections to the draft minutes provided. Hearing none, Jane Harrison made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Vicky Daniels, and approved by the Board.

*Treasurer’s Report* – Forrest summarized the amount remaining in the legal fund. He also discussed that the accountant is reviewing options to invest part of the UNRBA’s funds in a Certificate of Deposit. Ryan Eaves presented the Treasurer’s Report for the period ending October 31, 2025. The checking account balance at the close of the statement was \$702,523.71, and the savings account balance was \$1,293,471.69 (a copy of the Treasurer’s Report is posted on the UNRBA website). Following review of the report, Carl Rist made the motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented, seconded by Vicky Daniels, and approved by the Board.

*FY2027 Budget Discussion* – Forrest summarized the uncertainty around the rules readoption process and the role of the UNRBA in the future. Following adoption of the rules and considering the long and short term, the UNRBA will need to develop a water quality protection plan to implement the rules, support development of a site-specific chlorophyll-a standard for Falls Lake, evaluate and, if approved, implement some level of monitoring in the watershed, and continue to fund the legal fund for FY 2027 and perhaps beyond, depending on the progress on rule readoption. The Board discussed the burden that the State is placing on the local taxpayers to not only meet the Falls Rules but also to conduct additional monitoring and modeling studies. DWR no longer monitors the five largest tributaries to Falls Lake due to resource constraints. Tributary water quality data is critical to tracking nutrient loading to Falls Lake and the impacts of nutrient management and consideration of other land use changes in the watershed. Forrest recommended that the UNRBA continue its leadership role to protect the interests of its members and taxpayers and to provide the data and analysis that will be needed each time the rules are readopted (every ten years). Forrest presented a planning level budget of \$769,400 for FY2027. He also suggested that total member dues could be reduced by \$160,000 for FY2027 based on the anticipated remaining funds from FY2025 and FY2026 in the Brown and Caldwell Modeling and Regulatory Support Contract. He explained that less modeling work had been needed in FY2025 than budgeted for, and that a six-month extension had been granted under the provisions of the FY2025 contract. While some modeling support continues to be needed to support rules readoption, there will likely be technical support funds also remaining in the FY2026 budget. Before the rules are readopted in FY2027, the UNRBA will need to determine the level of support that will be needed from an Executive Director and supporting contractors including monitoring and modeling. The Board will need to finalize its budget in March and approve all contracts in June. However, to help guide the member budget-development process for FY 2027, he recommended that jurisdictions plan on new dues based on the projected \$769,400 FY 2027 budget, reduced by the projected \$160,000 from the FY 2025 and FY 2026 budgets that would not be spent. Projections for dues for FY 2027 are therefore \$609,400. Forrest asked if there were any objections to this as a planning number for the jurisdictions. No concerns were noted. Forrest reminded the Board that some adjustment may need to be made before the budget is finalized in March.

*Appointment of the Officer Nominating Committee*– The Executive Director provided suggestions for the Officer Nominating Committee to nominate UNRBA Board Officers for 2026 for consideration by the Board at

their January 2026 Annual Meeting. He suggested Carl Rist, Terry Hackett, Ed Buchan, and Georgana Kicinski but noted that the Board could make whatever adjustments they deemed appropriate. Following discussion, Russ May made the motion to appoint the Officer Nominating Committee with those individuals nominated, Vicky Daniels seconded, and the Board approved.

*Appointment of the Personnel Committee*– The Executive Director provided information on the previous membership of the committee. Based on that, he made suggestions for Personnel Committee membership for evaluation of Executive Director services during 2025. Based on previous membership, he identified Wendy Jacobs, Jane Harrison, Russ May, Ryan Eaves, Reggie Hicks, Kathy Cooper, Ed Buchan, and Jim Wrenn as potential members. Following discussion, Vicky Daniels made the motion to appoint the Personnel Committee as identified, Marilyn Carter seconded, and the Board approved. The Chair noted that the review process would be open for input from all Board members, Alternates, and PFC members and that this would be an in-person meeting to be held in December 2025.

*Approval of the FY2026 Contract with WSP for Dr. Lebo to Continue to Support Development of a Site-Specific Chlorophyll-a Standard*– Forrest Westall reviewed the need for continued support on the development of a site-specific chlorophyll-a standard by Dr. Martin Lebo. WSP has expended their budget under the FY2025 contract, and Forrest had distributed a proposed contract reviewed by WSP for FY2026 for review and consideration before the meeting. Following discussion, Carl Rist made the motion to approve the contract as presented, seconded by Jane Harrison, and approved by the Board.

*Approval of the 2026 Meeting Dates* – The Executive Director presented the proposed meeting dates for UNRBA Board Members and the Path Forward Committee for 2026. Following discussion, Carl Rist made the motion to approve the meeting dates proposed, Marilyn Carter seconded, and the Board approved. Forrest said the website would be updated to show the meeting dates for 2026 which are available [here](#).

*Motion to Recess the meeting of the UNBRA Board of Directors to Sit as the UNRBA Compliance Group Committee (CGC)*– Forrest reviewed the process by which the UNRBA administers the Stage I Existing Development Interim Alternative Implementation Approach (IAIA) through the UNRBA Compliance Group Committee as specified in the UNRBA Bylaws. Wendy Jacobs called for a motion to recess the UNBRA Board of Directors to sit as the UNRBA Compliance Group Committee. Following this discussion, Jane Harrison made the motion to recess the Board, seconded by Carl Rist, and approved by the Board.

### **Action Items of the UNRBA Compliance Group Committee**

*Approval of the UNRBA IAIA Year 4 Annual Summary Report* – Forrest summarized the Year 4 summary report which had been distributed to the Board for review and consideration. He reported that at the end of the first four years of implementation, the UNRBA membership was required to invest a minimum of \$6 million in watershed health projects but actually has invested \$16 million. Forrest praised the tremendous effort of the membership in going way beyond the investment requirement. Wendy referenced the detailed project descriptions attached to the summary report and noted the impressive work of the Association in the management of this watershed. Following discussion, Carl Rist made the motion to approve the UNRBA IAIA Year 4 Annual Summary Report, Jane Harrison seconded, and the CGC approved.

*Approval of the Addendum to Attachment B of the UNRBA Bylaws*– Forrest explained that the IAIA Program Document was developed and established as Attachment B of the UNRBA Bylaws as approved by the CGC and adopted by the Board. The IAIA was established as a five-year program, ending June 2026, and the Falls Rules will not be readopted before then. Forrest summarized an addendum to Attachment B that had been distributed for review and consideration by the CGC and the Board that extends the IAIA Program by five years or until the Falls Rules are readopted and the Program Document is updated. Forrest noted that because the IAIA Program Document is an attachment to the Bylaws, the UNRBA Board of Directors would need to approve the revisions as a change to the Bylaws, provided the CGC approves the extension. Following discussion, Jane Harrison made the motion to approve the Addendum to Attachment B of the UNRBA Bylaws, Carl Rist seconded, and the CGC approved.

*Approval of a Letter to the Environmental Management Commission (EMC) and Division of Water Resources (DWR) to Submit the UNRBA IAIA Year 4 Annual Summary Report and Request an Extension of the IAIA Program*– Forrest distributed a draft letter to the CGC for submittal to the EMC and DWR to submit the UNRBA IAIA Year 4 Annual Summary Report and request an extension of the IAIA Program. He noted that approval of the letter and authorization of the Chair to sign would be dependent on the action of the Board to approve the revised Bylaws. Following discussion, Carl Rist made the motion to approve the letter pending approval of the revised Bylaws by the Board and authorizing the CGC Chair to sign, Jane Harrison seconded, and the CGC approved.

*Motion to Recess the meeting of the UNBRA Compliance Group Committee and Resume the Session of the UNRBA Board*– Following the conclusion of the business of the UNBRA CGC, Jane Harrison made the motion to recess the Committee and resume the meeting of the Board, seconded by Carl Rist, and approved by the Committee.

### **Subsequent Action Items of the UNRBA Board**

*Approval of Revisions to the UNRBA Bylaws*– Forrest explained that revised UNRBA Bylaws were distributed to the Board with the Addendum to Attachment B and edits to the history notes of the Bylaws (i.e., specifying when the Bylaws were adopted and noting each amendment date). Following discussion, Carl Rist made the motion to approve the revised UNRBA Bylaws, seconded by Marilyn Carter, and approved by the Board.

### **Informational Items**

*Status of the Falls Lake Rules Readoption Process* – Forrest reviewed the Rules Readoption schedule and stakeholder process undertaken to develop “draft-draft” rules (the preliminary draft before a final draft is approved by the Board). He reviewed the extensive work and stakeholder engagement that the UNRBA has used to develop its draft rules. This process has been impacted by DWR starting an effort to draft its own set of rules. He reminded the Board that in response to DWR’s drafting effort that the UNRBA team incorporated, while still retaining the objectives of the UNRBA, language from DWR’s draft rules provided in late August. These September redrafts were shared with the extensive list of stakeholders included in the PFC and Board email lists, including DWR. Subsequently, at the invitation of the DWR Director, the UNRBA team and the Board Chair met with the Chair of the EMC and DWR Leadership on September 24, discussed the wastewater allocations, and touched on the other rule issues. DWR requested an analysis of nitrogen loading reductions since 2006 to support a reasonable adjustment in the wastewater allocations. On October 7, 2025, the group met again, with PFC leadership included to discuss outstanding areas of disagreement. General, conceptual consensus was achieved on the Purpose and Scope Rule, Existing Managed Lands Rule, and New Development Rule. The UNRBA provided DEQ, DWR, and the EMC Chair with an evaluation of the loading changes since 2006. Following the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, Forrest distributed updated versions of these three rules to the Board reflecting the areas of consensus; the Board reviewed these October redrafts at their October 21, 2025, meeting. Forrest shared that DWR has not yet responded to the October drafts or provided a proposal for the UNRBA to consider regarding the Wastewater Rule. A follow-up meeting with the Chair of the EMC and DWR Leadership is being scheduled for January. A meeting to review DWR and the UNRBA rule drafts is being scheduled for December. Forrest also discussed the information item presented at the November 12, 2025, EMC Water Quality Committee regarding approval of the UNRBA Rules. The UNRBA submitted its watershed and lake modeling reports and requested approval from DWR and the EMC in letters submitted in December 2023 and December 2024, respectively. The UNRBA is compiling a summary document to outline the steps the UNRBA has taken to meet the requirements of the Falls Lake Adaptive Management Provision including submittal of the letters to DWR and the EMC and the follow up communications from DWR via email indicating that the models have been developed according to the UNRBA Modeling Quality Assurance Project Plan and that no further review or comment on the models or reports would follow, and that the December 2024 email “closes the loop.”

*Continued Rule Development for Jordan Lake and High Rock Lake Watersheds* – Forrest discussed the potential impacts of DWR’s draft proposals for the High Rock Lake and Jordan Lake nutrient management strategies. He noted that the UNRBA team is continuing to monitor these processes. Falls Lake is significantly different than High Rock and Jordan Lakes, and regulated entities in Falls have been complying with New Development, Existing Development, Agriculture, and Wastewater Rules since 2011. Requirements in revised rules for Jordan and High Rock Lake could be overly burdensome to jurisdictions and citizens in Falls who have already conducted extensive implementation. Alix Matos noted that DWR would be releasing the Jordan Lake New Development Rules within the next week, and we were unsure how that might impact the Falls New Development Rule. John Huisman, DWR, confirmed that the Falls Rules would reflect the UNRBA’s discussions with the Chair of the EMC and DWR Leadership on October 7, 2025, and that the Jordan Lake and High Rock Lake New Development Rules could rely on a different framework.

*Communication Support* – In addition to the activities discussed earlier in the meeting, Forrest reviewed efforts to provide effective communication of the work of the UNRBA and our efforts to readopt the Falls Lake Rules to key stakeholders. Upcoming events, as noted, include follow-up discussions with the Chair of the EMC and DWR Leadership. Forrest noted that the UNRBA met several months ago with EPA to discuss the assessment issue and will schedule a follow-up meeting through Fred Andes at Barnes & Thornburg when this follow-up contact is appropriate.

*Other Items* – Forrest listed other items the UNRBA is tracking including the NC State University UNRBA and Jordan Lake One Water research study and the impacts of PFAS/PFOS on treatment costs and local governments. He noted that Jay Rickabaugh at NC State University offered to present preliminary results of the study to the UNRBA. Forrest will work on scheduling this as part of a PFC or Board meeting.

The next scheduled Board meeting will be held January 21, 2026, at 9:30 A.M. at the Butner Town Hall with an option for remote access.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.