

Cumberland County ABC Board
March 9, 2026
Regular Meeting
Person Street, 424 Person St, Fayetteville, NC 28301

PRESENT: Terri Thomas, Chair
Jordan Stewart, Vice Chair
Christopher Bullard, Board Member
Wade Fowler, Board Member
David Horne, General Manager
John Crawford, Chief Law Enforcement
Teresa Nevills, Human Resources Director
Neil Yarborough, Attorney
Henry Tyson, Liaison

ABSENT: Delvin McAllister, Board Member

Ms. Thomas called the meeting of the Cumberland County Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to order at 6:03 PM.

Ms. Thomas asked if there were any guests. Mr. Horne introduced Ms. Teresa Nevills, Human Resources Director, filling in for Ms. Shull.

Ms. Thomas asked if there were any agenda adjustments. There were none.

Ms. Thomas asked if there were any announcements. Mr. Horne stated that registration for the national conference and hotel accommodations are now open, and he requested that anyone planning to attend notify him by March 25th.

Required Reading

Ms. Thomas read the required reading, Statute GS 18B-201. The Board members had no conflicts of interest concerning any matters on the agenda.

Minutes

Ms. Thomas asked for the approval of the February 9, 2026 minutes.

Motion: Mr. Bullard moved that the Board accept the February 9, 2026 minutes as presented.

Second: Mr. Stewart

Vote: Unanimous

Law Enforcement Report

Ms. Thomas asked for the February 2026 Law Enforcement Report.

Chief Crawford gave the February 2026 Law Enforcement report.

Reported activity:

- 3 violation reports submitted to ABC Commission
- 15 underage compliance checks (3 violations); 1 sell/give to underage away from permitted establishment; 1 underage possession away from permitted establishment
- 34 permittee inspections
- 354 total compliance checks
- 2 seller/server trainings; 4 alcohol education sessions
- 3 additional criminal charges; 4 agency assists
- 296 ABC store checks
- 16 reported larcenies (14 confirmed)
- 13 arrests; 5 warrants issued
- 56 compliance checks of convenience stores, bars, and restaurants

Ms. Thomas asked for the approval of the February 2026 Law Enforcement Report in the packet.

Motion: Mr. Bullard moved that the Board accept the February 2026 Law Enforcement Report.

Second: Mr. Fowler

Vote: Unanimous

General Manager's Report

Ms. Thomas asked for the February 2026 General Manager's reports.

Mr. Horne gave the February 2026 General Manager's report.

State sales decreased 3.24% in February. Cumberland County sales decreased 2.65%.

Mr. Horne presented the list of top-selling items in the state for January 2026. While Hennessy ranks first or second in Cumberland County, it is only thirteenth statewide. Tito's remains the top-selling item across the state.

He also noted that Blanton's was distributed to every store on Saturday; however, as of noon on Monday, it was still available on shelves in several locations.

Mr. Horne reviewed the Board sales report. The 2.65% decrease equated to a decrease of \$117,574.64, with year to date sales being down \$869,232.42.

Mr. Horne reported that the decline in sales reflects a national trend, with small craft alcohol businesses closing due to decreased demand. Retail sales were down \$130,665.45, while mixed beverage sales increased by \$13,090.81.

In response to Ms. Thomas, Mr. Horne stated that Ramsey Commons generated higher sales independently than when both it and the Ramsey Street store were operating, producing approximately \$400,000 more in profit last year despite similar operating costs. He also noted that consolidating MXB operations into Sycamore Dairy has been effective, with other Boards making similar changes, offering greater product variety despite increased travel for some customers.

Mr. Horne noted that moving MXB all into Sycamore Dairy seems to be working well and other Boards have made similar changes as well. While there may be an inconvenience in driving further to the store, the variety of product available is much greater.

Mr. Tyson asked what recommendations Mr. Horne would make if the decline in sales continues. He acknowledged that consolidating mixed beverage operations was a prudent step in reducing expenses but inquired about additional measures. Mr. Horne stated that, from a business standpoint, the Ramsey Street store should be closed, as continuing operations there is not financially justifiable. He added that the typical 5% cost-of-living increase could be reconsidered during the upcoming budget process and that there may be opportunities to reduce labor costs, particularly in the warehouse.

Mr. Tyson further asked whether closing the Ramsey Street store would result in job losses. Mr. Horne explained that, historically, store closures have not required layoffs, as positions were absorbed through natural turnover. Ms. Nevills noted that nine new employees had been hired within the past week, and Mr. Horne added that existing trained staff could be reassigned instead of hiring additional personnel.

Ms. Thomas inquired whether Human Resources tracks why employees leave. Ms. Nevills stated that most employees depart without notice, limiting the ability to conduct exit interviews. Mr. Horne added that many employees prioritize hourly wages and schedule flexibility over benefits, and that the area's transient population, influenced by the military presence, contributes to workforce turnover.

Mr. Horne reported that he has begun removing underperforming products from the Ramsey Street store and has ceased introducing new items. He noted that customers at that location typically purchase specific items rather than browsing. He also informed the Board that the building requires significant repairs, including new flooring.

Ms. Thomas asked whether Hudson Bay Seafood might be interested in purchasing the building, to which Mr. Horne responded that they are not.

Mr. Horne reported that income from operations totaled \$480,958.46, but emphasized that while the Ramsey Street store remains profitable, its profit margins are steadily declining.

He also noted that unsold items have been transferred to other stores and that Sycamore Dairy had approximately 250 special-order items originally intended for mixed beverage customers that were not fully purchased.

Ms. Thomas asked for approval of the February 2026 General Manager's report.

Motion: Mr. Bullard made a motion to approve the General Manager's report.

Second: Mr. Stewart

Vote: Unanimous

Old Business

Ramsey Street – River Landing

Mr. Horne reported a proposed lease of approximately \$300,000 annually for a 10-year term; negotiations were unsuccessful, and no path forward was identified.

Mr. Yarborough stated the rate was negotiated from \$14 to \$11 per square foot, but concerns arose over misrepresentation, unrestricted access requests, and flexible lease terms.

Estimated renovation costs were approximately \$750,000.

Mr. Yarborough noted ABC would have been an anchor tenant and an asset to the location.

The owner requested annual lump-sum rent payments.

Mr. Tyson noted a proposed Target shopping center nearby may offer future opportunities.

Mr. Horne stated the Ramsey Commons lease runs through January 2028, allowing time to secure a new location.

Hope Mills – Camden Commons

Mr. Horne reported receipt of a letter of intent for outparcel 16, allowing for a building up to 10,000 sq. ft.; ABC would require approximately 8,000 sq. ft.

The proposal is for a ground lease with a 15-year term and renewal options every 5 years, up to 30 years.

Target is expected to open in July 2027; the site is projected to be ready for construction in January 2027.

ABC would own the building but lease the land.

Mr. Horne stated the location is not expected to negatively impact the current Hope Mills store due to proximity to Robeson County and nearby housing growth.

The site could potentially serve mixed beverage customers.

Mr. Yarborough expressed concern over long-term rent costs exceeding \$1 million within the first 10 years.

Mr. Tyson noted the benefits of a developed shopping center may outweigh costs and stated the letter of intent could be non-binding.

Mr. Yarborough requested time to review the letter of intent to confirm non-binding terms.

Motion: Mr. Bullard made a motion to authorize the Chairman to execute a letter of intent in a form deemed appropriate by the General Manager and the attorney.

Second: Mr. Fowler

Vote: Unanimous

Adjournment

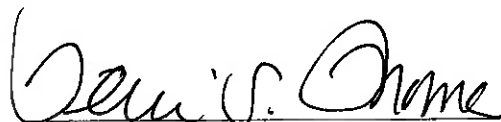
Ms. Thomas asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Mr. Bullard moved to adjourn.

Second: Mr. Fowler

Vote: Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.


Chairperson