



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
TOWN OF LAKE LURE ABC BOARD**

Monday, March 16, 2026  
3:30 P.M.

This Meeting was held at the Town Hall at The Landings

**Present:** Mr. Richard Sayles, Chair

Mr. Trace Boswell, Board Member  
Mr. Peter O'Leary, Board Member  
Patricia Crain, Store Manager  
Rhonda Cook, Accountant  
Commission Scott Doster

**Absent:** Ms. Esther Lusk, Board Member  
Mr. Bob Cassano, Vice Chair

**I. Call to Order**

Town Clerk, Kimberly Martin called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

**II. Agenda Adopted**

Richard Sayles made a motion to approve the agenda with changes moving new business chair and vice chair appointments to Item three and shifting all other business down one. Trace Boswell seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor.

### **III. Chair and Vice Chair Appointment**

A nomination to re-appoint Richard Sayles as chair and Bob Cassano as vice Chair. Trace Boswell made a motion to accept the nominations. Peter O' Leary seconded the motion and all were in favor.

### **IV. Conflict of Interest Statements**

There were no conflict of interest.

### **V. Public Comment**

Frederick Jaeger introduced himself and his new distillery project, outlining plans to start production and regional collaboration by April 1<sup>st</sup>, aiming for a strong local market presence.

The distillery will produce rye and single malt whiskies using local and regional grains sourced from Riverbend Malt, Asheville, emphasizing regional authenticity.

A focus on brandies aged in leftover rum and whiskey barrels aims to revive traditional spirits with local historical significance.

Frederick highlighted plans for collaborative branding with the city, including customized bottles and barrel branding for Lake Lure.

Initial production targets include blending approximately 12 barrels (~3,000 bottles) to test market response conservatively.

Distribution plans involve navigating state ABC regulations with special orders initially, progressing toward warehouse inclusion for broader retail access.

Early sales will rely on special orders coordinated through Greg Stallings at the NC ABC commission, bypassing warehouse storage initially.

Warehouse approval is a future goal to enable full distribution to ABC stores statewide, critical for scaling operations.

Frederick aims to conduct tastings at local ABC stores to build consumer awareness and engagement, with board support to coordinate events.

Pricing strategy targets affordability with single malt at about \$48 shelf price and rye around \$34, designed to appeal to vacationers and locals alike.

The distillery plans to emphasize organic and non-GMO ingredients, with a product line including a unique herbal liqueur "Mountain Mud" and a coffee liqueur with real vanilla beans, enhancing product differentiation (21:06).

This product diversity supports year-round sales and broadens appeal beyond whiskey, targeting niche markets.

Frederick's background and dedication to quality assure a credible brand narrative that can resonate locally and regionally.

The distillery aims to maintain strong community ties through collaborative projects and shared branding initiatives.

**VI. Approval of the February 9, 2026, Regular ABC Board Meeting Minutes**

Trace Boswell made a motion to approve the minutes from February 9, 2026 with Peter O' Leary seconded the motion. All members voted in approval.

**VI. New Business**

**A. Discuss ABC Store Operations**

Sales trends at the ABC store show a positive increase in liquor by the drink (LBD) orders, signaling growing restaurant demand and tourism optimism.

LBD sales surpassed last year's \$14,000 by hitting \$15,000 in February, reflecting expanded restaurant orders and anticipated higher traffic. Despite LBD growth, overall liquor sales declined by approximately \$4,000 compared to the previous year, creating a net negative impact on total revenue.

The store received three pallets of liquor this morning, significantly increasing inventory to meet expected demand surges.

Staffing adjustments are underway to address increased workload and cover hours lost due to a key employee's schedule changes.

The store plans to hire at least one part-time employee, possibly two, to replace and supplement current staff, responding proactively to workload increases.

The hiring process includes background checks and drug testing, ensuring compliance with store policies.

Applications have begun to be reviewed, signaling imminent staffing decisions to maintain operational efficiency.

Operational expenses have risen, with a notable increase in professional fees that need review for potential reduction.

Expense increases have contributed to the store operating at a \$495 deficit versus February last year despite sales gains in LBD.

The board discussed the importance of cost control to improve overall financial health while supporting sales growth initiatives.

Positive customer feedback on store cleanliness and organization reflects well on current management and staff efforts.

## **B. Review Financial Report**

Rhonda Cook advised expense increases to have contributed to the store operating at a \$495 deficit versus February last year despite sales gains in LBD. The board discussed the importance of cost control to improve overall financial health while supporting sales growth initiatives.

Updates from council included below.

The water level at the dam is being carefully managed to support construction and river health, with the full level expected by Thursday at around 990.

Construction of a permanent dock for four boats is progressing, with rip-rap and pilings installation nearing completion this week.

New decking materials have been selected for walkways and docks, focusing on durability and aesthetic improvements to enhance visitor experience.

Stockpile removal is ongoing, involving dump truck activity but at a reduced intensity compared to earlier phases.

Telecommunications infrastructure upgrades are underway, with calibration of new equipment expected within a week and multiple carriers preparing to deploy service.

AT&T is completing calibration, while T-Mobile has permits and may already be operational.

Verizon's application for antenna installation is pending, causing some frustration due to slow progress.

Improved cell and internet services, including competitive pricing from Spectrum and new providers like Dark Star, offer better connectivity for the community and businesses.

Ongoing tower repairs and upgrades position the area for improved digital infrastructure supporting local economic growth.

Peter O' Leary made a motion to enter into closed session in accordance with G.S. 143-318(a)(6) for the discussion of personnel matters. Trace Boswell seconded the motion and all were in favor.

## **VI. Adjournment**

With no further business, Trace Boswell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Peter O' Leary seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

**Attest:**