

Lake Norman Marine Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes – December 18, 2025

The Lake Norman Marine Commission met in Regular Session on Thursday, December 18, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., at the Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire / Rescue Headquarters located at 4011 Slanting Bridge Rd. in Sherrills Ford, NC.

Members present were Barbara G. Beatty, Richard C. Gaskins, Kristian Hernandez, Mark Mullen, Jason Ralston, Cameron Sloan, and Gregory Truesdell. Commissioner Timothy Holder was not present.

Also present were Lincoln County Manager Davin Madden and Catawba County Manager Mary Furtado.

1. **Call to Order.** In absence of having established Commission officers, Ms. Furtado called the regular meeting of the Lake Norman Marine Commission to order at 7:00 p.m., noting a quorum was present.
2. **Public Comment.** No members of the public were in attendance requesting to speak.
3. **Approval of Minutes.** Commissioner Beatty made a motion to approve the Regular Minutes of the November 20, 2025 Lake Norman Marine Commission meeting. **The motion was seconded by Commissioner Truesdell and passed unanimously.**
4. **Partner Reports.** Lieutenant Scott Strickland, with NC Wildlife Resources Commission's Law Enforcement Division, was in attendance and provided information on the status of each of the LNMC's member counties' regulations or prohibitions around shooting firearms in the vicinity of the lake. Lt. Strickland indicated that each county's regulations are separate, and there is a WRC Officer responsible for enforcement in each county. Lt. Strickland indicated he would provide the contact name for each county's enforcement officer.
5. **Operational Updates.** Ms. Furtado provided an overview of the status of ATONS maintenance and repair on the lake. Iredell County is currently managing the contract with Mozely Construction for ATONS maintenance, and the following report was received on December 15, 2025 from the contractor:

The current scope of ATON repairs is extensive, and prioritization of urgent items requires informed discretion. Based on risk assessment and field conditions, unlit markers and missing signage present the highest immediate safety risk to boaters. While non-operational lights create significant hazards during nighttime navigation, missing signs can render markers dangerous during daylight hours as well.

Current Conditions

At the time of assessment, the following deficiencies were identified:

- *24 channel markers with non-operational lights*
- *45 shoal markers with non-operational lights*
- *26 buoys with non-operational lights*
- *14 missing signs*

These deficiencies directly impact navigational safety and increase the likelihood of vessel damage and personal injury.

Based on current inventory levels, the following items must be procured for total cost of \$36,382:

- *34 M650 (large marker lights)*
- *17 M550 (buoy lights)*
- *Replacement navigational signage*

Labor required includes \$37,300:

- *Replacement of all non-operational lights*
- *Installation of all missing signs*
- *Repair or replacement of three broken or missing marker poles*

Total Budget Request

Materials \$36,382

Labor \$37,300

Total \$73,682

Justification

This budget request addresses all currently identified high-risk deficiencies, restoring full lighting functionality and replacing missing signage across affected markers and buoys. Completion of this scope will significantly improve navigational safety for both daytime and nighttime boating. While additional repairs remain—such as long-term buoy replacements and replacement of faded signage—those items are not considered immediately hazardous and can be addressed incrementally as funding allows. Approval of this request represents a practical, high-impact first phase toward restoring the ATON system to a safe and reliable condition.

After receiving this information, Commission talked about the importance of addressing these deficiencies quickly. Ms. Furtado explained that because the contract with Mozely is currently being maintained by Iredell County, the work would be performed through the County, with the other Lake Norman Marine Commission member counties being billed for their equal share. **A brief discussion ensued before Commissioner Gaskins made a motion authorizing staff to move forward with the ATONS repairs and replacements as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ralston and passed unanimously.**

Duke Energy Lake Services Representative Chad Broadway greeted the Commission and provided an overview of a FERC application submitted by the Town of Davidson for construction of a kayak launch at Parham Park on Lake Norman. Mr. Broadway reminded the Commission that in the past, the LNMC has been called upon to provide large non-project use applications, which are proposed projects not related to energy generation. Duke has invited LNMC to provide feedback through the agency consultation process. According to Mr. Broadway, the installation proposed by the Town of Davidson is a true public recreation facility in the sense that it increases citizen access to Lake Norman in a clear and demonstrable way. The Commission discussed the application's merits, noting enthusiastic support for the project, with the three recommended elements noted below identified for further follow-up with the applicant:

- Installation of life ring floatation devices on kaya launch;
- Completion of hydrographic survey for the launch to assess water depth at low lake levels and to identify aquatic environment below the water line; and

- If during construction process, any equipment or infrastructure will be left in the water overnight, installation of precautionary safety lighting around construction installation for boater awareness and safety.

Commissioner Gaskins moved to recommend approval of the application, with incorporation of the above comments. Commissioner Truesdell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. Executive Director Job Description. The Commission discussed the draft Executive Director job description included in the agenda packet. The group agreed via consensus the position would be part-time. Assuming 20 hours per week at \$25 per hour, this would total \$26,000 per year, before including benefits and payroll taxes. There was discussion regarding the requirement for a Bachelor's degree; the group modified this requirement to instead be a preference, and the list of specific academic concentrations was removed. The Commission asked staff to compare the draft job description with the Lake Wylie Executive Director job description and to integrate any relevant components that are missing. There was consensus to move forward with posting the position as soon as possible, targeting the week of January 5th for job advertisement release, with a first review date of February 10, 2026.

This item led to a larger discussion of the LNMC budget. **A Budget Subcommittee was established to develop a draft budget for the LNMC's consideration**, especially given that member counties' FY26/27 Budget processes are underway. Commissioners Beatty, Mullen, Ralston, and Truesdell volunteered to serve on the Budget Subcommittee, which will be convened by the County Managers in the coming weeks.

7. Administrative Services Contract. Mr. Madden shared that he has requested but not yet received a proposed administrative services agreement with the Centralina Council of Governments (COG). This request was based on a similar arrangement the Centralina COG has with the Lake Wylie Marine Commission. The requested proposal for the Lake Norman Marine Commission would include Financial Management Services (Accounts Payable and Receivable, Annual Funding Request Preparation and Invoicing, Annual Budget Development, Annual Audit Coordination, Monthly Reporting), Commission Administrative Support (Commission Management Responsibilities, Monthly Meeting Preparation, In-Meeting Responsibilities, Post-Meeting Responsibilities, and Special Activities or Committee Meetings), and Public Information Support. The total amount of the contract with Lake Wylie Marine Commission is \$27,900 (which does not include the cost of a financial audit), and it is anticipated the cost for LNMC would be comparable. The Commission requested this item come back before them in January for formal action and approval, if possible.

8. Bylaws Revisions. The Commission engaged in a detailed discussion of each section of the bylaws, suggesting edits and revisions that will be reflected in the version of the bylaws distributed for the January 2026 Commission meeting. The round of revisions discussed were relatively minor in nature. The Commission agreed the LNMC Bylaws should be reviewed by attorney Chris Clarke, who previously supported the Commission, to ensure there are no issues with the content, once the revisions are completed.

9. Selection of 9th Commission Member. In revisiting the discussion of selecting a ninth commissioner, the group established the following target for selecting the 9th member:

- 12/31/25: Nominations due to County Managers via email
- 1/5/26: Managers share packet of nominations

- 1/15/26: Commissioners work to consensus on short list for candidate interviews
- 2/19/26: Commissioners conduct interviews for 9th member

10. **Board of Directors Notebook.** Ms. Furtado asked if any Commissioners would prefer a paper copy in addition to access to an electronic library. Commissioners Beatty and Sloan requested hard copy.
11. **Open Discussion.** Ms. Furtado invited Commissioners to share any additional thoughts they had for items needing to be addressed in the near-term by the Commission. Commissioner Mullen raised the topic of election of officers. The group agreed this is an important step, as it is critical to establishment of a bank account and other necessary administrative tasks, and should be added to the agenda for action as soon as practical.
12. **Adjourn.** With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m. after a motion by Commissioner Beatty, which was seconded by Commissioner Ralston, passed unanimously.