

# 2026 ESSENTIALS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

## DAY 1

**7:30–8:30 am** Check in and Breakfast

**8:30–9 am** Welcome and Introduction  
From Campaigning to Governing

Transitioning from campaign mode to governing in the public arena is an opportunity and challenge. We'll talk about some of the challenges you can expect, tools for being an effective board member, and strategies for being part of a high-performing board.

*Elliot Stoller, UNC School of Government*

**9–10:30 am** “Live From City Hall! The Coates Town Council Meeting”

The fictitious Town of Coates has a Council that sometimes runs amok and sometimes gets it right! Can you recognize their good or bad habits?

*Ben Mount, Jennifer Schneider, and Baxter Wells, NC League of Municipalities*

*Carl Stenberg and Elliot Stoller, UNC School of Government*

**10:30–10:45 am** Break

**10:45–11:45 am** Understanding the Scope of  
Municipal Authority

Knowing the limitations and boundaries of your authority to act can be tricky; some actions are restricted by law, some are authorized but not required, and some are mandated. In this session, you'll learn the importance of these distinctions.

*Tom Carruthers and Jennifer Schneider, NC League of Municipalities*

**11:45 am–12 pm** Getting to Know the NC League of  
Municipalities

*Rose Vaughn Williams, Executive Director, NC League of Municipalities*

**12–1 pm** Lunch

**1–2 pm** Parliamentary Procedures

As members of the elected body, public officials need to know how to process the work of governing, bring issues before the council, and engage in discussion and debate in a manner that allows the public to fully understand the issues and actions being taken.

*Tom Carruthers, NC League of Municipalities*

**2–3 pm** Financial Management in Municipal Government

The role of the elected body is to be at all times aware of the financial condition of the unit of government. These two workshops help you learn what is necessary to affirm that the financial affairs of your unit are in full compliance with all applicable laws and required governmental practices.

*Greg Allison, Rebecca Badgett, Kara Millonzi, or Bill Rivenbark, UNC School of Government*

**3–3:15 pm** Break

**3:15–4:15 pm** Financial Oversight and Internal Controls in  
Local Government

*Rebecca Badgett, UNC School of Government*

**4:15–4:45 pm** Things I Wish I'd Known Then:  
Incumbents' Stories

Governing is an ever-evolving learning process. In this workshop, we'll hear candid stories of lessons learned from municipal leaders during their years of experience in public service.

*Elliot Stoller, UNC School of Government*

**5–6 pm** Reception

This time together is a valuable opportunity to meet and greet other municipal officials. We encourage you to introduce yourself around the room and get to know others who are part of the realm of municipal government across North Carolina.

*Hosted by the NC League of Municipalities*

# 2026 ESSENTIALS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

## DAY 2

**7:30–8:15 am** Breakfast

**8:15–8:20 am** Opening Comments

*Elliot Stoller, UNC School of Government*

**8:20–9:15 am** Public Choices, Public Values

Four distinct public values come into play in searching for solutions to public problems. No single value is right or wrong, and learning to understand the values at play will help you navigate the tensions underlying your choices.

*Carl Stenberg and Elliot Stoller, UNC School of Government*

**9:15–10:30 am** CONCURRENT SESSION

**Building and Managing Relationships**

Your future success is dependent on your understanding of the roles and relationships that are key to governing a municipality. The role of the elected body varies based on your unit's form of government. In the mayor/council form, the elected body shares management and departmental supervisory responsibilities, often with the assistance of an administrator. In the council/manager form, an appointed full-time manager oversees the management, operations, and supervision of employees. Select the workshop that is appropriate for your unit.

**Workshop A: Mayor/Council Municipalities**

*Ben Mount and Baxter Wells, NC League of Municipalities*

**Workshop B: Council/Manager Municipalities**

*Kim Nelson and Carl Stenberg, UNC School of Government*

*Roger Stancil, NC City and County Management Association*

**10:30–10:45 am** Break

**10:45–11:45 am** Open Meetings and Public Records

The people have a right to know the process by which they are governed. This means more than knowing the result—it's being able to observe, watch, read, hear, and participate in the process itself. Public service can often feel like living in a fishbowl. Do elected officials have privacy? Where are the often nebulous lines between "public" and "private"? Who draws them?

*Rebecca Fisher-Gabbard and Kristina Wilson, UNC School of Government*

**11:45 am–12 pm** Getting to Know the School of Government

*Aimee Wall, Dean, UNC School of Government*

**12–12:45 pm** Lunch

**12:45–1:45 pm** Expert Roundtables

**Land Use & Managing Growth**

*Jim Joyce and Adam Lovelady, UNC School of Government*

*Ben Mount, NC League of Municipalities*

**Purchasing & Contracts**

*Crista Cuccaro, UNC School of Government*

*Jennifer Schneier, NC League of Municipalities*

**Economic Development & Revitalization**

*Jonathan Morgan and Tyler Mulligan, UNC School of Government*

**Law Enforcement**

*Jeff Welty and Shea Denning, UNC School of Government*

*Baxter Wells, NC League of Municipalities*

**Emergency Management & Preparedness**

*Jacob Hunter, Taylor Morris, Amanda Stratton, and Aimee Wall, UNC School of Government*

**1:45–2 pm** Break

**2–4 pm** Ethics

GS 160A-87 requires that local elected officials receive two clock hours of Ethics training within twelve months of their election or re-election to office. This workshop is designed to meet that statutory requirement. Certificates of compliance will be distributed to those who attend the entire two-hour session.

*Kristina Wilson or Rebecca Fisher-Gabbard, UNC School of Government*

*Tom Carruthers or Ben Mount, NC League of Municipalities*

**4–4:15 pm** Next Steps/Adjourn