I. **Purpose:**
   a. The Agricultural Advisory Board will implement the provisions of the Chatham County Voluntary Agriculture District Ordinance adopted August 19, 2019.
   b. The Agricultural Advisory Board shall be governed by the terms of Chapter 106 – Article 61, Preservation of Farmland, of the General Statutes of North Carolina and by the terms set forth in the Chatham County Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance.

II. **Membership:**
   a. The Advisory Board shall consist of nine (9) members appointed by the Board of Commissioners from names of individuals submitted by any member of a Chatham County Agricultural or Natural Resource Agency, or any other member of the Chatham County agricultural community.
   b. Each Advisory Board member shall be a Chatham County resident.
   c. Each member shall be actively engaged in farming, agribusiness, forestry and/or be a representative of agricultural interests.
   d. The Board of Commissioners shall appoint at least one (1) member from each of the following four (4) quadrants of the County: East of Hwy 87 and north of US 64 (NE Quadrant), east of Hwy 87 and south of US 64 (SE Quadrant), west of Hwy 87 and north of US 64 (NE Quadrant), and west of Hwy 87 and south of US 64 (SW Quadrant). Each Voluntary Agricultural District shall be represented by at least one member of the board who lives in the quadrant in which the VAD is located. A position on the Agricultural Advisory Board may remain vacant for a reasonable period of time until a suitable candidate is willing to serve. If no suitable candidate
from a quadrant is willing to serve, upon request of the chair of the Agricultural Advisory Board, the Board of Commissioners may appoint a member from another quadrant.
e. Additional members may be appointed to the Board in an *ex officio* capacity from the Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors, the Chatham County office of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, the U.S. Farm Service Agency, or other agencies, as deemed necessary by the Board of Commissioners. Members serving in an *ex officio* capacity shall neither vote nor count toward quorum requirements.
f. **Tenure:** All appointments shall be for terms of three years, with reappointments permitted.
g. **Vacancy:** Any vacancy on the Advisory Board shall be filled by the Board of Commissioners for the remainder of the unexpired term.
h. **Removal:** Any member of the Advisory Board may be removed by the Board of Commissioners upon a majority vote of the Commissioners. No cause shall be required for removal.

### III. Officers and Duties:

a. **Chairperson:** The Advisory Board shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair each year at its first meeting of the fiscal year. The Chair shall preside over all regular or special meetings of the Advisory Board.
b. **Vice-Chairperson:** In the absence or disability of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall exercise all the power of the Chair.
c. **Additional Officers:** Additional officers may be elected each year at its first meeting of the fiscal year.
d. **Secretary:** The Secretary shall keep in a permanent volume the minutes of every meeting of the Board. These shall show the record of all important facts pertaining to each meeting, every request acted upon by the Board, and all votes of members of the Board.
e. **Technical Advisors:** The Cooperative Extension Director and the Chatham County District Soil and Water Conservationist shall serve as technical advisors for the Board along with any designated staff.
Advisors shall be present at all meetings and shall furnish information pertinent to the issues being discussed by the Board. The technical advisors shall also participate in studies, reviews, and examinations of farmland preservation techniques and assist in the advisement of the Board of Commissioners on projects, programs, or issues affecting the agricultural economy or activities within the County that will affect agricultural districts.

e. Committees: Board may approve the establishment of committees, as it deems necessary. The composition of committees shall be determined by the Board with the committees selecting their own Chair.

IV. Rules of Conduct for Members:

a. Members of the Board may be removed for cause, including violation of the rules stated below.

b. Faithful attendance at all meetings of the Board and conscientious performance of the duties required of members of the Board shall be considered a prerequisite of continuing membership of the Board.

c. Any member who fails to attend at least 75% of the regular meetings, except for excused illness, or other extraordinary circumstance, of the Board during any one-year period shall be removed from the Board. The Chair or Vice Chair is empowered by the Chatham County Commissioners to define extraordinary circumstance on a case-by-case basis and to excuse absences.

d. The Chair shall notify the Commissioners of any member whose absences exceed 25% of the regular meetings. Members not meeting the 75% attendance requirement may be removed by the action of the Board of County Commissioners and replaced by another interested individual as needed from the district.

e. No Board member shall take part in the hearing, consideration or determination of any case in which he/she is personally or financially interested. When a member has an immediate family member or a financial interest, they shall make note of this and request that they be excused from consideration of an agenda item.
f. No Board member shall vote on any matter deciding an application unless he/she has attended the public meeting on that application. When a member has not attended the public meeting for an application they shall make note of that fact before the vote on the item and the Chair shall excuse them from the vote.

V. Meetings:

a. **Advisory Board Year:** The Advisory Board shall use the Chatham County fiscal year (July -June) as its meeting year.

b. **Regular Meetings:** Regular meetings of the Board shall be held four times a year on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. The meetings shall begin at 7:00 pm unless notice is provided otherwise.

c. **Special Meetings:** Special meetings of the Advisory Board shall be held at the call of the Chair, Vice-Chair, or upon the request of at least 3 Board members. At least forty-eight hours written notice of the time and place of special meetings shall be given by the Chair or Vice-Chair to each member of the Board.

d. **Meeting Notice:** Meeting dates and times shall be posted 7 days in advance on the county website.

e. **Open Meetings:** All meetings shall be open to the general public. Individuals wishing to speak before the Board must sign in prior to the meeting with the Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary. The time allowed for public comments will be a total of 30 minutes with individuals allowed three minutes each with no yield.

f. **Cancellation of Meetings:** Whenever there are no new applications for consideration, or revocations of the Farmland Preservation Agreement, or whenever so many regular and alternate members notify the Chair of inability to attend and a quorum will not be available, the Chair may dispense with a regular meeting by giving written or oral notice to all members not less than 24 hours prior to the time set for the meeting.

g. **Quorum:** A quorum is defined as a majority of the Board members. No business may be conducted by the Advisory Board without a quorum present.
h. **Voting:** All regular members shall vote on each issue made in the form of a motion, unless they have disqualified themselves for one or more of the reasons listed in Section IV-E and have been excused from that vote. All abstaining from voting, and not previously excused from that vote, will be counted in favor of the motion. All silent votes will be counted in favor of the motion. The vote of a majority of the members present and voting shall decide issues before the Board.

i. **Records:** The Secretary shall keep minutes of the proceedings showing the vote of each member upon each question, or if absent or failing to vote, indicating such fact, and shall keep records of its examinations and other official actions, all of which shall be filed in the county office of Cooperative Extension, and shall be a public record.

**VI. Powers and Duties:**

a. Review and approve or disapprove application of landowner for enrollment qualified farmland, horticultural land, or forestland in a voluntary agriculture district;

b. Make recommendations concerning the establishment and modification of areas of the county to be represented on the Agricultural Advisory Board;

c. Review, and approve the form of the conservation agreement required by the N.C.G.S. 106-737;

d. Conduct public hearings pursuant to Article XI of the Voluntary Agriculture District Ordinance to consider any action by a governmental unit to condemn an interest in qualifying farmland within a District;

e. Advise the Board of Commissioners on projects, programs, or issues affecting the agricultural economy and agricultural, horticultural or forestry activities within the County that affect Voluntary Agricultural Districts;

f. Review and make recommendations concerning proposed amendments to the Chatham County Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance;
g. Review the countywide farmland protection plan as defined in N.C.G.S. 106-744 (e)(1) and make updated recommendation to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners annually;

h. Study additional methods of protection for farming, horticulture, forestry, and the attendant land base, and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners;

i. Make recommendations concerning the establishment and modification of Voluntary Agricultural Districts;

j. Report as requested to the Board of Commissioners on the status, progress and activities of the County’s farm preservation program including the County’s Voluntary Agricultural District program;

k. Perform other agriculture, horticultural, and forestry-related tasks or duties assigned by the Board of Commissioners.

l. Submit to the Commissioner of Agriculture at least once a year, a written report including the status, progress, and activities of the County's farmland preservation program per N.C.G.S. 106-743;

j. **Amendments:** These operating procedures and by-laws may, within the limits allowed by law, be amended at any time by an affirmative majority vote of the Board members, provided that such amendment(s) be presented in writing at a regular or special meeting preceding the meeting at which the vote is taken.

These rules are hereby read, approved, and adopted by the Chatham County Agricultural Advisory Board on the 14th day of January, 2020, the following members voting:

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<tr>
<th>AYE:</th>
<th>NAY:</th>
<th>NOT PRESENT:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Doug Burleson</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Cathy Jones</td>
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