

Item Title: Award of RFP #24-108 (Lessee and Operator of Five County Stadium for Wake County Government & the Town of Zebulon)

Specific Action Requested:
That the Board of Commissioners:

- 1. Awards the RFP to lease and operate Five County Stadium for Wake County Government to Capitol Broadcasting Corporation (CBC);**
- 2. Authorizes staff to draft a lease agreement between Wake County, the Town of Zebulon, and CBC, subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the Term Sheet and terms and conditions acceptable to the County Attorney, for approval at the October 6, 2025 Board of Commissioners meeting; and**
- 3. Authorizes the County Attorney to publish a 30-day notice related to the lease and as specified by North Carolina General Statute 160A-272 (Lease or Rental of Property).**

Item Summary:

Purpose: The Wake County Board of Commissioners must approve leases of County property.

Background: In 2024, the Carolina Mudcats (a Class A minor league affiliate of and owned by the Milwaukee Brewers) announced the relocation of the team to the City of Wilson. In late 2024, both the County and the Town of Zebulon (Town) approved a lease amendment for early termination.

In January 2025, the County and Town issued RFP #24-108 (Lessee and Operator of Five County Stadium for Wake County Government & the Town of Zebulon), seeking a new tenant and operator for the Stadium. The County and Town received three responses to the RFP. After significant evaluation by staff, elected officials, and subject matter consultants, staff recommend awarding the RFP to CBC, according to the terms and conditions outlined in the Additional Information Section.

Strategic Plan: This action supports Inclusive Prosperity Goal 3: By 2029, nine out of ten residents asked will share that they can find and enjoy enriching experiences that support our community's high quality of life.

Fiscal Impact: The proposed terms of the lease impact both the County's capital contributions to the Stadium property and ongoing operating commitments. The funding for stadium improvements is set aside in

County Capital reserves, and future budget actions will accompany future actions by the Board to consider approval of the lease.

Additional Information:

In January 2025, Wake County and the Town of Zebulon released RFP #24-108 (Lessee and Operator of Five County Stadium for Wake County Government & the Town of Zebulon). The County received three responses to the RFP.

The responses to the RFP were reviewed and/or evaluated by County and Town staff and elected officials, staff from Wake County Economic Development and Visit Raleigh, and by the County's contracted consultant (CAA ICON). Criteria used to review the responses included, but not limited to:

- Alignment with Town, County, and public input goals and objectives;
- Documented ability and capacity to create and sustain a sports team in a facility and geographic area of similar size;
- Proposed financial terms, including capital investment requirements;
- Project schedule within the timeframe desired by the Town and County; and
- Qualifications of key personnel and management.

Following a thorough review of the responses, County and Town staff began non-binding negotiations with CBC as lessee and operator of the Stadium, beginning January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2035.

Highlights of the terms and conditions include:

- The County and Town receiving bi-annual lease payments totaling \$710,000 over the 10-year lease period;
- The lessee assuming all annual operating expenses, including insurance, utilities, and basic maintenance;
- The Town and County remaining responsible for capital repairs of the facility;
- The lessee submitting an annual event and operations plan to the County and Town;
- The Stadium hosting, at a minimum, a Coastal Plain League (CPL) baseball team each season (starting in 2026) and all Wake Technical Community College (WTCC) baseball, softball, and men's and women's soccer games;
- The lessor's (County and Town) ability to host up to 10 total rent-free events that use the Stadium's seating bowl annually; and
- Ability of the tenant to develop the property, subject to terms and conditions agreed upon with the Town and County.

In exchange for the lessee's maintenance and operation of the Stadium, the County and Town agree to an initial investment of approximately \$10 million total between 2026 and 2027 for the following improvements:

- Replacement of existing field, outfield wall, scoreboards, and lighting to accommodate multiple types of sporting and entertainment events;
- Replacement of the first base side bleachers with a family viewing area and playground to be accessible on non-event dates;
- Replacement of the third base side bleachers with social gathering spaces for Stadium patrons;
- Renovations and refreshes of the concourse, concession stands, upper-level group spaces, home and visitor clubhouses, and staff offices; and
- Create a capital repair fund to be used for ongoing capital maintenance (the annual rent funds received will help maintain this fund through the lease term).

To incentivize additional activity at the Stadium, the lessee will be subject to receiving a credit of \$1.50 per ticket sold for non-tenant ticketed events held at the Stadium, up to a maximum of \$100,000 annually.

Fiscal Impact: The following table compares the County's annual average financial operating impact between the current lease structure and the proposed terms:

	Current Lease (average FY 2022 - FY2024)	Proposed Lease (10-year annual average)
Maximum Ticket Credit	\$ -	\$ 85,000
Facility Maintenance	\$ 79,900	\$ -
Exterior Maintenance	\$ 34,000	\$ -
Safety/ Security/ AV Systems	\$ 3,500	\$ -
Insurance	\$ 11,000	\$ -
Total Average Annual Expenses	\$ 128,400	\$ 85,000
Average Rent	\$ 27,500	\$ 60,350
Net Annual Exposure	\$ 100,900	\$ 24,650

The \$10 million investment in Stadium improvements and the capital repair fund will be paid by the County and Town at the current ownership interest of 85% and 15% respectively. The County intends to fund its allocation with capital reserves previously set aside for anticipated Stadium improvements desired by the current tenant.

The proposed capital improvements do not preclude future, already planned capital maintenance items in the County's FY 2026 – FY 2032 CIP for elevator and HVAC life cycle replacements at the Stadium.

Specific budget actions related to appropriating these funds will be included in the Board's October 6, 2025, action concurrent with the lease approval.

Attachments:

1. Presentation
2. RFP #24-108