



WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, declaring the slaves in Confederate territory free, paving the way for the passing of the 13th Amendment which formally abolished slavery in the United States of America; and,

WHEREAS, word about the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation was delayed some two and one-half years, to June 19, 1865, in reaching authorities and African-Americans in the Southern United States; and,

WHEREAS, the celebration of the end of slavery, which became known as Juneteenth, is the oldest known public celebration of the end of slavery in the United States and has been celebrated by the African-American community for over 150 years; and,

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates African-American freedom and celebrates the achievements gained through education, perseverance, and greater opportunities, while reminding each of us of the precious promises of freedom, equality, and opportunity which are at the core of the American Dream; and,

WHEREAS, the first Juneteenth celebrations were a time for reassurance, prayer, and the gathering of family members and neighbors, and today continue as a time of remembrance and celebration within communities across the country, promoting knowledge, appreciation of African American history and culture, and respect for all people; and,

WHEREAS, Gaston County is proud to celebrate this historic day for the fifth time and is excited to join the Seventh Annual Gastonia EbonyFest Juneteenth Festival, organized by HELP Carolina, with activities including the Juneteenth Parade in downtown Gastonia on **Saturday, June 14, 2025**, and the Gastonia EbonyFest Juneteenth Festival on the same day; the Farm-to-Table Youth Event hosted in partnership with Keep Gastonia Beautiful on **Tuesday, June 17, 2025**; and the Juneteenth finale on **Thursday, June 19, 2025**, featuring vendors, food, entertainment, community engagement, and fireworks at the Rotary Pavilion.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of all of Gaston County, do hereby declare June 19, 2025 as

## ***Juneteenth***

in Gaston County, North Carolina and urge all citizens to join in celebrating this day of significance in the history and heritage of our nation and County, and to honor local trailblazers such as Aunt Charlotte McClee, Gastonia's first midwife and a symbol of resilience, community-building, and hope for future generations.

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Chad Brown, Chairman

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Jim Bailey

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Bob Hovis

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Cathy Cloninger, Vice-Chair

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Tom Keigher

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Allen R. Fraley

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Scott Shehan

To be Adopted the 27<sup>th</sup> Day of May 2025