Minutes

Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Pender County Public Assembly Room
805 S. Walker Street, Burgaw, NC

PRESENT: Vice Chair Brad George
Commissioner Jerry Groves
Chairman Randy Burton
Commissioner Brent Springer
Commissioner Jimmy T. Tate

ABSENT:

OTHER PRESENT: Colby Sawyer, County Manager
Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager
Trey Thurman, County Attorney
Other Staff and Members of the Press and Public

---

1. CALL TO ORDER

   Chairman Burton called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

2. INVOCATION

   Commissioner Groves led the invocation.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

   Commissioner Springer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

   Assistant County Manager Meg Blue stated there were some changes that needed to be made to the agenda.

   First, the Pender County Schools entered into a local agreement for operation and maintenance of a lift station for the JH Lea school project.
   Commissioner Groves made a motion to approve.
   Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
   The motion passed unanimously.

   Second, item 9.1, the intent to close a Public Right of Way, needed to be tabled.
   Commissioner Groves made a motion to table the item.
   Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
   The motion passed unanimously.

   Third, item 21.2, SUP 2025-56 (special use permit) needed to be tabled.
   Commissioner Groves made a motion to table item 21.2.
   Commissioner George seconded the motion.
   The motion passed unanimously.

   Fourth, item 9.7, Redistricting, needed to be tabled since the Manager was out sick.

Vice Chair George made a motion to table item 9.7.
Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION

6.1 Update on the Emergency Services Merger — Gregory Grayson, Sarah Fulton

Sarah Fulton, Strategic Director, introduced Chief Grayson. Grayson gave an update on the merger. Grayson stated that they would continue to provide quarterly updates, they were working under the MOU provided and were continuing to work on the task list. He explained that there would be about 10% of the task list that would have to be completed post merger.

Commissioner Tate inquired where the merger was at with the Pender EMS & fires retirement. He does not want these individuals to lose their retirement. Grayson advised that new employees would be transferred over to the Local Government Employees Retirement System and that older employees would need to be addressed. Fulton explained that they would receive longevity for their service time and the 401K would roll over. Blue, Assistant County Manager, stated the County is trying to acknowledge their service in every way possible. They can take a lump sum or annuity purchase. Commissioner Tate questioned why the individuals could not be added to the Local Government retirement system. Blue explained that they had not worked for the Local Government so they would not receive coverage, but that a prior Local Government employee could buy into the Local Government retirement system.

6.2 Update on Newspaper Advertising Spending — Margaret Blue

Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager, presented the item. Blue went over the last two years of advertising costs with The Pender-Topsail Post and Voice vs the FY 2026 costs with Wilmington Star News. Blue did note that the County only advertised what was required while using the Star News and that was the reason for the difference between the two. Vice Chair George asked if a more compatible comparison could be done. Blue responded it could be done but would take a little longer to prepare.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Pearsall spoke about redistricting.
Thomas Brown spoke about redistricting.
Matt Hornacek spoke about EMS not having access to his home. The commissioners asked for this to be looked into and help.
Kenny Ramsey spoke about redistricting.
Samantha Warrell spoke about redistricting.
Charlie Schoonmaker spoke about redistricting and Chemours expansion.
Walter Davis spoke about redistricting.
Tony Farrior spoke about redistricting.
Louis Saunders spoke about Commissioner Groves' comments and backing of Fallin for

Commissioner.
Alan Cutler recognized Jodi Redding for retiring after three plus decades of service.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Vice Chair George made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.
Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

8.1	Approval of Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes from January 5, 2026	Tracy Sholders
8.2	Approval of the January 20, 2026 regular Board of Commissioners meeting minutes	Tracy Sholders
8.3	Approval of sale of surplus, a 2017 Ribcraft boat from Pender County	Alan Cutler
8.4	Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment from General Fund Balance for Insurance/Property Loss funds in the amount of $46,021.00	Alan Cutler
8.5	Approval of FY 2026-27 NCACP Grant Award in the amount of $13,200.00	Alan Cutler
8.6	Approval of a Budget Amendment to Increase Health Department WIC Revenues and Expenditures in the amount of $5,231.00	Carolyn Moser
8.7	Approval of an increase to Purchase Order to Smithscapes, LLC in the amount of $31,000 for Mowing and Landscaping at County Properties	Wyatt Richardson
8.8	Motor Vehicle Releases and Refunds	Jessica Hudson
8.9	Refund/Release Requests for items meeting NC G.S. 105-381	Jessica Hudson

9. APPROVALS AND RESOLUTIONS

9.1 Intent to Close a Public Right of Way and Announce a Public Hearing on the Matter: Old Swann Point Avenue in Rocky Point — Michael Dickson

Commissioner Groves made a motion to table item 9.1.
Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

9.2 Adoption of the 2030 Strategic Plan — Sarah Fulton

Sarah Fulton, Strategic Director, presented the item. Fulton noted the plan had 5 goals, a mission statement and 65 tasks.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

9.3 Resolution Opposing the Expansion of the Fayetteville Chemours Plant — Tracy Sholders

Vice Chair George presented the item and read the resolution. George mentioned a documentary on it called "The Devil We Know".

Commissioner Springer made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

9.4 Approval of 60-Month Managed Print Services Agreement with Systel, Annual NTE $97,320 — Marcel Miranda

Marcel Miranda, IT Director, presented the item. Miranda advised that several companies had been reviewed and Systel was the lowest cost with no cost per monthly lease. He also advised that classified printers would be required to use their badge to get sensitive information to print. Commissioner Springer inquired how long the bid was good for, with Miranda responding, 30 days. Commissioner Springer inquired how long it took to get the quote, with Miranda replying 3 months.

Vice Chair George made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

9.5 Approval of Purchase Order in the Amount of $85,845 to Capital Ford in Raleigh NC for two 2025 F150 Trucks for the Inspections and Permitting Department, as budgeted from Account 650-407403 (Capital Outlay-Vehicles) — Jerry Turbeville

Tasha Herring, Permitting and Customer Experience Manager, presented the item. Herring explained that this was for two (2) new vehicles to replace two (2) 2013 trucks that were being transitioned to other areas. Commissioner Springer questioned why the original two were being transitioned out, with Herring replying that they were over the mileage limit. Wyatt Richardson, Facilities & Fleet Director, stated they met the replacement policy qualifications and would be transferred to other departments for use. Commissioner Tate asked if the 2013 vehicles were checked out prior to transitioning to another department. Richardson replied they were mechanically verified. Commissioner Springer questioned why Ford Explorers were not used like New Hanover County. Herring stated Pender has more rural areas than New Hanover

County. Blue explained that the useful life of vehicles is considered 5 years. After that, the depreciation value is zero.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to table the item.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
Commissioner Groves voted in affirmation.
Chairman Burton and Vice Chair George voted in opposition.
The motion passed 3 to 2.

9.6 Approval of the Hampstead Library Project Ordinance, Budget Amendment, and Construction Contract — Nick West

Nick West, Project Manager, presented the item. West explained there were 7 bids received for the project. Daniels and Daniels were the lowest and came in under the project estimate by $4,487,000. Commissioner Tate asked why AIA Contract vs County Contract. Quinton Morgan, Staff Attorney, stated a County Contract could be made, but he wrote an addendum to the AIA Contract that was accepted. The addendum was the fastest way to address the issues. Commissioner Tate asked who was authorized to approve change orders. Blue responded that the County Manager was authorized to approve anything up to $30,000. Anything over that amount had to be brought before the Board. Commissioner Springer asked if they could approve the order and amendment but hold the contract. Blue replied the bids would be no good, and they would have to approve all or none.

Vice Chair George made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
Chairman Burton and Commissioner Tate voted in ascension.
Commissioner Springer voted in opposition.
The motion passed 4 to 1.

10. DISCUSSION

11. APPOINTMENTS

11.1 Appointment to the Board of Equalization and Review — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item. Sholders' noted there were five (5) openings with five (5) applications.

Vice Chair George made a motion to approve Chuck Routh, Larry Bolick, Kathleen Sumner, Mile Bielec, and Zachary Grizzle.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

11.2 Appointment to the Voluntary Agricultural District Board — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item. Sholders' advised there was one (1) opening and (1) application.

Commissioner Tate made a motion to approve Jared Johnson.
Vice Chair George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

11.3 Appointment to the Southeastern Economic Development Commission — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item. Sholders' explained that there were two (2) positions open with four (4) applications received.

Vice Chair George made a motion to approve Alyssa Morrissey and David Bollenbacher.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

12. MAPLE HILL WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

13. ROCKY POINT WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

14. SCOTTS HILL WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

15. MOORE'S CREEK WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

16. CENTRAL PENDER WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

17. PENDER COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

18. SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD

19. ITEMS FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY, COUNTY MANAGER, ASSISTANT COUNTY MANAGER, & COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Trey Thurman, County Attorney, requested the Board go into closed session for item three (3) Attorney Client Privilege, item four (4) Economic, item five (5) Aqusistion of Property and item six (6) Personnel.

Commissioner Springer asked if the county could make sure the HVAC in the Penderlea gym was working. Blue responded it was going to be replaced. Commissioner Springer questioned when. Blue responded the PO had been approved. Commissioner Springer inquired about the gas facilities constantly having issues. Wyatt Richardson, Facilities and Fleet Director, stated the recent issues had been resolved and that the County is never without fuel as they can use the cards anywhere.

Commission Tate asked if citizens paying for private trash companies were still being charged the fee for trash through the County. Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager, replied yes because the private company still uses the County facilities to dump that trash. Commissioner Tate asked if the prices could be renegotiated with GFL. Blue stated it would be looked into.

Chairman Burton asked Trey Thurman, County Attorney, to give an overview of the BOA case regarding Shaw Hwy. Thurman replied the Board denied the appeal 3 to 2. The applicant's attorney stated they would appeal. They have 30 days to appeal. This could take years to solve, and they can ask for a stay during the process. Commissioner Burton asked James Proctor, Interim Public Utilities Director, to provide a short presentation at the next meeting on billing. Commissioner Burton asked Sarah Fulton, Strategic Director, to check the MOU as there were some large capital orders placed for fire engines.

Commissioner Tate asked about the help for Maple Hill and getting a small park. He thought someone in the Planning Department was going to look into grants to assist with this.

8:28pm a recess was taken.
8:45pm back from recess.

20. CLOSED SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)

Commissioner Tate made a motion to go into closed session at 8:53pm
Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair George made a to end closed session at 10:13pm.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

21. 8PM PUBLIC HEARINGS: SPECIAL USE PERMITS/ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS/RESOLUTIONS

21.1	REZONE 2025-93: Request to rezone one tract of land totaling approximately 9.79 acres from GB, General Business, to RP, Residential Performance, in the Rocky Point Township.	Madelynn Spencer

Madelynn Spencer, Planner I, presented the item. Spencer explained the applicant was requesting the property be zoned back to RP for residential use.

Commissioner Tate made a motion to approve.
Vice Chair George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

21.2	SUP 2025-56: Request for a Special Use Permit to allow for the operation of a Nonmetallic Mineral Mining & Quarrying Sand Mine in the Holly Township.	Madelynn Spencer

Commissioner Groves made a motion to table this item to the March 2, 2026 meeting.
Vice Chair George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

22. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair George made a motion to adjourn at 10:13pm.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]