Minutes

Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting
Monday, March 2, 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
Quinton Morgan, Staff Attorney
Other Staff and Members of the Press and Public

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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

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, advised three (3) changes needed to be made to the agenda.

First item 7.1, Utility Water Bill Information, needed to be moved to Item 6.1.

Vice Chair George made a motion to move item 7.1 to item 6.1.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
Commissioner Springer had stepped out.
Chairman Burton and Commissioner Groves voted in the affirmative.
The motion passed.

Second, the Penderlea HVAC system needed to be added as item 9.4,

Commissioner Tate made a motion to add item 9.4.
Vice Chair George seconded the motion.
Commissioner Springer had stepped out.
Chairman Burton and Commissioner Groves voted in the affirmative.
The motion passed.

Third, the purchase of two (2) new F150's for Inspections needed to be tabled indefinitely for more information.

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

Commissioner Tate made a motion to approve the agenda with these changes.
Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
The motion pass unanimously.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION

As amended by a motion from Vice Chair George, seconded by Commissioner Tate and passing with a vote of 4 to 1 this item was moved from 7.1 Public Comment/Utility Water Bill Information on the agenda to item 6.1 Public Information.

James Proctor, Interim Public Utilities Director, presented the item. Proctor explained that a bill had to be two (2) months past due before the cutoff was initiated. The bill shows the cutoff date prior to the due date. Utilities has initiated a text message (for those who signed up) two (2) days prior to the due date and one (1) day prior to cutoff. This has reduced the number of cutoffs by about 75%. Utilities also just started accepting electronic payments and this is going well too.

Chairman Burton noted the bills were confusing and asked Proctor to get more information on it. Proctor stated he believed the county was sold a formatted bill and was not changeable. Commissioner Springer questioned how long the contract was good for. Procter stated it was a relatively new contract, but he would look into the exact dates. Sawyer clarified that if the date was in black it was not a cutoff date but if it was in red, it was a cutoff date. Proctor confirmed this.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Debbie Walker spoke about redistricting.
Tom Brown spoke about retaliation with the paper, Pender EMS and Fire merger and redistricting.
Walter Davis spoke about redistricting.
Cindy Moore spoke about Maple Hill and parks.
Kenny Ramsey spoke on redistricting.
James Malloy spoke on redistricting.
Louis Saunders spoke about Phil Cordeiro and election mailers.
Charlie Schoonmacker spoke about Union Rescue and them needing a truck.

7.1 Utility Water Bill information James Proctor

As noted in the action above, Item 7.1 Utility Water Bill Information was moved as amended to 6.1.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Tate made a motion to approve the consent agenda.
Vice Chair George seconded the motion.
The motion passed uananimously.

8.1	Approval of Purchase Order to EMA Resources, Inc. for $150,000.00	James Proctor
8.2	Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment to Accept and Budget North Carolina Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Grant Award in the amount of $20,000	Michelle Leach
8.3	Approval of Addition of Utilities & Solid Waste Department Vehicles to Vehicle Telematics Platform Agreement	Marcel Miranda
8.4	Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment to Transfer Insurance/Property Loss revenue funds to expenditures in the amount of $48,380.23	Alan Cutler
8.5	Approval of Resolution to accept the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund - Emerging Contaminants Principal Forgiveness Loan Offer	James Proctor
8.6	Approval of Amendment to McKim&Creed Contract for the Rocky Point Wastewater Feasibility Study in the amount of $25,200.00	James Proctor
8.7	Motor Vehicle Releases and Refunds	Jessica Hudson
8.8	Refund/Release Requests for items meeting NC G.S. 105-381	Jessica Hudson

9. APPROVALS AND RESOLUTIONS

9.1	Approval of a Budget Amendment and approval of a Purchase Order to Patterson Dental Supply, Inc. for a Panorex X-Ray Machine in the amount of $55,944.94	Carolyn Moser

Carolyn Moser, Health Director, presented the item. Moser explained that a Panorex X-Ray machine's life expectancy is about five (5) years. The one currently owned by the county is over 17 years old, it's broken, and it's hard to find the parts needed to repair it. The new machine would pay for itself in two (2) years with the dental clinic's medical receipts.

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

9.2	Adopting the Southeastern North Carolina Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan	Tommy Batson, Virginia Norris

Tommy Batson, Emergency Management Director, presented the item. Batson stated the policy has to be updated every five (5) years. If approved, the next step would be the state and then FEMA.

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

9.3	Resolution for the Redistricting of Pender County Commissioner Districts	Colby Sawyer

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, presented the item. Sawyer explained that Pender County was not legally required to redistrict. Because Pender County uses Residency districts, there was no legal requirement for them to be equal. If the county chose to go to Electoral Districts, meaning you voted for the district you lived in, they would have to be equal. This is where one (1) vote, one (1) person comes in. Sawyer noted that according to General Statute 153A22, Pender County does not have the authority to redistrict on its own. If the county wants to redistrict under residency districts, the General Assembly had to do it, since that is how it was previously done. If the county moved to Electoral Districts, it could be done two (2) ways. One is to put a referendum on the ballet and the other is for the General Assembly to tell us.

Sawyer noted it made sense to keep our districts in line with the population. However, legally, we would have to use the most recent census data for Electoral Districts, which is from 2020. We would be six (6) years behind and have to complete it again in a few years. Sawyer was advised by numerous professors to wait until the 2030 census.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to approve the resolution with the addition that Sawyer come back to the board with more information in October 2026.
There was no second.
The motion died.

Sawyer asked for direction from the board. Commissioner Tate recommended using Electoral Districts and coming back with more information, including dates. Sawyer asked for sixty (60) days to come back with a game plan, steps and further information.

Commissioner Tate made the motion to approve.
Commissioner George seconded the motion.
Chairman Burton, Commissioners Springer and Groves voted in opposition.
The motion died.

9.4	Approval of Purchase Order and Budget Ordinance Amendment for the purchase of a 20 Ton Trane Split System Heat Pump for the Penderlea Gym in the amount of $46,000 from 910Air Heating & Cooling.	Wyatt Richardson

As noted in action above, 9.4 Approval of Purchase Order and Budget Ordinance Amendment for the Purchase of a 20 Ton Trane Split System Heat Pump for the Penderlea Gym in the Amount of $46,000 from 910Air Heating & Cooling, was added as item 9.4.

Wyatt Richardson, Facilities & Fleet Director, presented the item. Richardson explained that there was a call about the Penderlea gym HVAC. Facilities worked on it. However, two (2) days later, it stopped again. The system is twenty (20) years old, 1 coil was not replaceable and the compressors failed. Commissioner Springer asked how long before it could be installed. Richardson said it would take two (2) weeks to get the materials in, so probably three (3) to four (4) weeks. Commissioner Springer inquired if it was turn key and Richardson responded yes, with a one (1) year warranty on parts. Vice Chair George asked if it was a five (5) year warranty on the compressors. Richardson replied yes.

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

10. DISCUSSION

Colby Sawyer, County Manager talked about:
* A flyer for Abbey Nature Reserve for 3/19 from 4-6pm
* BOA meeting on 3/18 at 9am
* Town Halls 3/12 in Burgaw, 3/17 in Hampstead, both at 6pm
* Board Retreat 3/26
* Calendar events are online
* Planning Board meeting 3/4
* Requested structure from commissioners for Town Hall meetings
* Closed session, 143-318.11, for three (3), Attorney Client, five (5), for Real Property and seven (7) for Criminal Misconduct.

Chairman Burton asked for an update on the number of ABC Board members, their terms and any vacancies at the next meeting.

Vice Chair George spoke about:
* Cleaning up the public records requests
* District voting
* Seitz retiring
* Having a moment of silence for the current war and the elections on 3/3

Commissioner Groves spoke about:
* Water to Shaw Highway, McCrary Road and for those who paid years ago and still do not have water
* Fighting everywhere
* Requested an update on the State audit
Sawyer, stated this would be addressed in closed session, but the State will not do an audit until the SBI investigation is complete.

Commissioner Tate spoke about:
* Considering what the people want with districting
* Staff meeting with Pender EMS & Fire about benefits
Blue stated there are Town Hall meetings for the spring but could have information by the

end of the week.
* The 250th celebration at Moore's Creek Battlefield having a great turnout
* Receiving good information from the Fire Marshall and what they do at these events
* Updating the citizens with the issues on Montague trash site
* If anyone followed up with Mrs. Horneseck
    Sawyer replied yes, there was a meeting for 3/6 with all parties involved
* Evan Jones, Eagle Scout present to earn his communication badge

Chairman Burton asked for an update on Salty Acres as they continue to build and grow. Justin Brantley, Interim Planning Director, stated the site was being monitored. The Board Order was sent out on 2/27 and we are expecting it to be appealed.

11. APPOINTMENTS

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

20. CLOSED SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)

    Colby Sawyer requested the board go into closed session for item three (3), Attorney Client, item five (5), Real Property and item seven (7) Criminal Misconduct.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to enter into closed session at 7:23pm.
Vice Chair George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Tate made a motion to end closed session at 7:51pm.
Vice Chair George seconded the motion.
Chairman Burton and Commissioner Groves voted in acceptance.
Commissioner Springer left the meeting.

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

21.1 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

Madelynn Spencer, Planner I, presented the item. Spencer explained the project was for a salt mine on a 551 acre parcel. The sand mine was to consist of three (3) phases and would use 200 acres of the parcel. There would be no blasting done at the site and a sand mine is permitted in this zone with a Special Use Permit.

Madeline Williams with Ward & Smith, the applicant's attorney, presented her applicant's case. Williams explained there would be no quarry operations, that it would be excavating only. The original hours of operation were 6am to 8pm, Monday through Friday. However, the applicant has changed the hours were to be 6am to 6pm. When the application to the State is submitted, it reaches out to nine (9) different agencies for input on the impact of the project. The site has intentionally been designed to locate the mining sites on the interior of the property and farther away from existing residential areas. Spencer stated there were two (2) accesses to the property and both were off Shaw Highway.

Williams introduced Jimmy Fentress, a licensed Civil Engineer and Land Surveyor, of Stroud Engineering. Fentress stated the project would have to be permitted through the Division of Land Resources and North Carolina Division of Environmental Quality. This would also require State water permitting. The de-watering of excavation would be addressed in the mining permit and any drainage on site would be re-directed to the swells for conveyance to adjacent areas.

Williams introduced Scott James a licensed engineer of Davenport Engineering. James stated they developed a custom trip generation estimate. James noted there would be three (3) employees and a maximum of six (6) trucks per hour. This lead to a total of 108 site trips per day.

Commissioner Groves questioned the depth of the excavations. Fentress replied twenty four (24) to twenty five (25) feet. Chairman Burton inquired how long the project was expected to take. Fentress responded about ten (10) years, four (4) for phase 1, four (4) for phase 2 and two (2) for phase 3. Commissioner Take asked about adverse drainage issues and citizens wells. Fentress replied that there were wetlands between the property from Shaw Highway to Lillington Road and there should not be an affect on wells.

Public Questions:
Daniel Chapoton asked it the applicant was aware that Lillington Road floods. Fentress replied there should be no additional runoff. Chapoton asked about the noise. Williams stated there

would be buffers added per the requirements.

Selina Warlick questioned if there were any wetlands on the property. Fentress replied yes. Chairman Burton inquired how much acreage was covered by wetlands with Fentress stating about 100 acres.

David Canady asked why only people within 500 feet were notified. Staff explained that the Unified Development Ordinance required the notice and Pender County sends out more notices than required.

Public Comment:
Dan Chapoton spoke against the mine.
David Canady spoke against the mine.
Sharon Carr spoke against the mine.
Selina Warlick spoke against the mine.
Dolores Raines spoke against the mine.

Williams responded the traffic would have less than a 5% impact. The acreage could be purchased and used to build 380 homes, which would increase the run-off in the area. This project intended to catch the run-off and control the drainage.

Commissioner Groves asked when the project would start and if a citizen's well drys up, would they be compensated? Williams stated she was not sure how the well drying up could be contributed to the mine.

Vice Chair George asked if the start hours could be changed due to the darkness at 6am and school buses picking up kids. Williams suggested that they changed it to sunrise. Justin Brantley, Interim Planning Director, questioned sunrise to 6pm Monday through Friday, with Vice Chair George responding, Yes.

Commissioner George made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Groves seconded.
Commissioner Tate recused himself from the vote.
Chairman Burton voted affirmatively.
The motion passed 3 to 0.

22. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Tate made a motion to adjourn at 9:50pm.
Commissioner George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]