



Minutes

**Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 7, 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

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, advised there was a new quote for item 8.11, asked for item 9.7 to be moved to after the closed session and for item 8.10 to be removed from the agenda.

Commissioner Tate requested that Public Comment be moved up due to the volume of public attendance.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to move 9.7 to after the closed session, remove item 8.10 from the agenda and to move public comment to the beginning of the meeting.

Vice Chair George seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC HEARING

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Janet Rivenbark, President of the Pender County Historical Society, presented the item. Rivenbark explained that the money given to them by Pender County was used for a pole barn for outside equipment.

6.2 Update on Public Records Requests

Colby Sawyer

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, presented the item. Sawyer explained what a public record request was, what could be released, the reasons for delays in responding and ways to increase response time.

6.3 Presentation on the Procurement History and Practices
Related to Board Attorney Services

Margaret Blue

Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager, presented the item. Blue went over the county's process for hiring board attorney services. Blue also provided current totals for each law firm paid to date. Vice Chairman George questioned if the board decided who and how to hire for attorney services. Blue responded yes. Trey Thurman, Board Attorney, also provided a couple of lawsuit cases he was working on.

6.4 Summary of Attorney Fees and Litigation involving
Pender County

Colby Sawyer

Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager, presented the item. Blue went over the county's current totals for each law firm paid to date.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

As noted in the action above, Item 7 Public Comment was moved as amended before item 6 Public Information.

Michael Buck spoke about the tax appraisals.

Josephine spoke about the tax appraisals and water.

Clara Willams spoke about clean water.

Annette Mceachin spoke about lower taxes and clean water.

Joyce Bordeaux spoke about water and higher taxes.

Sharon Matthis spoke about the tax appraisals.

Charlie Schoonmaker spoke about taxes.

Tom Brown spoke about skepticism of the appraisal company used.

Yvonne Brathwaite spoke about water.

Sarah Johnson spoke about clean water and tax appraisals.

Wesley Wooten spoke about utility work not being advertised properly for contractors.

Sandra Malpass Montague trash.

Wendy Davis spoke about tax appraisals.

Angela Keith spoke about the tax appraisals.

Tex Watkins spoke about the tax appraisals.

Regina Fenneel spoke about the tax appraisals.

Callie Hagans spoke about the tax appraisals.

Mary Anderson spoke about the tax appraisals.

Ivey Simpson spoke about the tax appraisals.

Melrose Lewis spoke about the tax appraisals.

Jamie McKenzie spoke about the tax appraisals.

Recess 6:45pm - 6:53pm.

Velma McKoy spoke about housing Landlords being paid on time, the disconnect between

planning and permitting and improper inspections.
Chazmin Fenneel spoke about the tax appraisals.
Mamie Hansley spoke about the tax appraisals.
Cheryl Highsmith spoke about clean water.
Joyce Carr spoke about clean water.
Carol Highsmith spoke about putting the people first.
Larry Highsmith spoke about clean water.
Debbie Walker spoke about water and tax appraisals.
Lewis Boney spoke about water.
Michael Fields spoke about the tax appraisals.
Cheri Proctor spoke about the need for information and education for the public.
Samuel Dixon spoke about water.
Kenny Fowler spoke about the tax appraisals.
Kim Meyer spoke about Abbey Nature Preserve, town halls and Comp Plan not being added to the UDO.
Frankie Saunders spoke about the tax appraisals.
Louis Saunders spoke about the tax appraisals.
Michelle White spoke about the tax appraisals.
Vernon Eakins spoke about the tax appraisals.
Michael Blackburn spoke about water.
Karen Moore spoke about the tax appraisals.
Daryl Wolf spoke about inaccuracies in the tax appraisals.
Monica Reed spoke about the tax appraisals.
Berndatte Keith spoke about the tax appraisals and the appeal process.

Vice Chairman Geoge gave several examples of tax appraisals that seemed inaccurate and stated the board needed to respond to the citizens. Commissioner Groves agreed there were a lot of inconsistencies, and it would take more than pennies to help the citizens. Commissioner Tate tasked Sawyer to find someone to help with the water issues in the county.

Commissioner Tate made a motion to suspend the rules.
Commissioner George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer inquired how much was paid to Vincent Valuations and could any of the money be recouped? Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager, responded that they were paid around 2.3 million, and she would have to research to see if any could be recouped.

Commissioner Tate made a motion to suspend the 2026 re-evaluation appraisals effective immediately, hire a contractor to review Vincent Valuations figures, and make the re-evaluation tax effective 1/1/2027.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Recess 8:37pm - 8:55pm.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Items 8.5, 8.11 and 8.12 were requested to be pulled for discussion.

Commissioner Tate made a motion to accept the consent agenda with the pulling of items 8.5,

8.11 and 8.12 for discussion.

Vice Chair George seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

8.1	Approval of the Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes from February 17, 2026	Tracy Sholders
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8.2	Approval of Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes from March 2, 2026	Tracy Sholders
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8.3	Approval to accept \$1,990.00 grant from the NRA and approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment	Zach White
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8.4	Approval of a Purchase Order to SHI for Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Annual Renewal in the amount of \$249,994.93	Marcel Miranda
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8.5	Approval to Purchase Forklift for Pender County Water Treatment Plant Maintenance Shop in the amount of \$46,273.03	James Proctor
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James Proctor, Interim Utilities Director, presented the item. Proctor introduced Jared Permenter, Maintenance Manager. Commissioner Groves asked how the pallets were currently being unloaded. Permenter responded by hand or pallet jack.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to approve.

Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

8.6	Approval to purchase 10 inch backflow preventer at the Pender County Water Treatment Plant in the amount of \$33,837	James Proctor
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8.7	Approval of Change Order for the Water Plant Generator Project to Increase Purchase Order by \$35,340.80.	James Proctor
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8.8	Approval of Invicta Water's Treatment Pilot Agreement and Purchase Order for \$74,000.00	James Proctor
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8.9	Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment to Close Wastewater Treatment Plant Berm Project	James Proctor
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8.10	Approval of Purchase Order for Sludge Removal at the Wastewater Treatment Plant to McGill Composting for	James Proctor
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\$60,000.00

As mentioned in the motion by Commissioner Springer, seconded by Vice Chairman George, and passed with a unanimous vote, this item was removed from the agenda.

- 8.11 Approval of a purchase order in the amount of Alan Cutler
 \$350,256.31 for 911 Communications Console
 Furniture

Sheriff Alan Cutler presented the item. Cutler explained that this was for ten (10) consoles for the new Law Enforcement Center. Jackie Ezzel, 911 Director, added that the state was paying for seven (7) of the consoles.

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

- 8.12 Motor Vehicle Releases and Refunds Jessica Hudson
Commissioner Brent Springer asked to be recused as his name was on the list.

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

- 8.13 Refund/Release Requests for items meeting NC G.S. Jessica Hudson
 105-381

- 8.14 Resolution to Designate Review Officers for maps/plats Jessica Hudson
 for recording with Register of Deeds office- Statutory
 Requirement NC G.S. 47-30.2(a)

- 8.15 Approval to increase Purchase Order# 213 for Joseph R.
 Vanguard in the amount of \$22,000 Blankenship

- 8.16 Approval to Increase Purchase Order # 75 To Target Carolyn Moser
 Specialty Products by \$47,770 to purchase additional
 Mosquito Chemicals for Spraying

9. APPROVALS AND RESOLUTIONS

- 9.1 Proclamation approving April as Sexual Assault Amanda Piner
 Awareness Month

Amanda Piner, Advocacy Coordinator with Coastal Horizons Rape Crisis Center, presented the item.

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

- 9.2 Resolution to Declare a Glock Model 22 Handgun Surplus and Award it to Retired Deputy Bridgette Brundidge in Recognition of Her Service to the Citizens of Pender County Alan Cutler

Sheriff Alan Cutler presented the item.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to approve.

Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- 9.3 Requesting approval of Donation of a 5-ton Military Vehicle from Surplus Military Property Program Alan Cutler

Sheriff Cutler presented the item. Chairman Burton inquired about costs involved with maintenance and branding. Cutler replied they could do the small maintenance, and they would use a decal for branding.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to approve.

Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- 9.4 Resolution of Support for the Installation and Construction of Concrete Median and Northbound U-turn Signal at the Intersection of US 17 and Royal Tern Drive Colby Sawyer

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, presented the item. Sawyer advised that the state was paying for this and the county was supporting it.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to approve.

Commissioner Groves seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

- 9.5 Approve a Purchase Order to UNC Institute of Public Health in the amount of \$100,000 to conduct the 2026 Community Health Assessment Carolyn Moser

Carolyn Moser, Health Director, presented the item. Moser explained that this was required every four (4) years. Chairman Burton asked why they chose the highest bidder. Moser replied they were the only ones that actually provided everything needed, and had completed it in the past, so had historical data.

* Clerk's Note: Commissioner Springer stepped out of the meeting.

Commissioner Tate made a motion to approve.

Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

- 9.6 Approval to Submit a 2026 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant Application for the Abbey Nature Preserve Trailhead Zach White

Zach White, Parks and Recreation Director, presented the item. White explained this was to move forward with the grant application and not a request for money.

* Clerk's Note: Commissioner Springer stepped out of the meeting.

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

Chairman Burton requested an update on Central Pender Park. White replied it was in the final stages. Once the punch list was completed, they would open the park with Port-a-John's. The hope was to have the park open within the next month.

9.7 Approval of Change Orders to Bobbitt for additional Nick West
 FF&E for Dental Equipment in the amount of
 \$40,229.72

As mentioned in the motion by Commissioner Springer, seconded by Vice Chairman George, and passed with a unanimous vote, this item was moved to after closed session.

Nick West, Project Manager, presented the item.

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

9.8 Montague Convenience Site Discussion and Direction Colby Sawyer,
 to Staff Susan Barnhill

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, presented the item. Sawyer presented four (4) options for the replacement of the Montague site.

1. Long Creek — share with the park. The cost would be 1 to 1.8 million for the site prep
2. FEMA property — cannot use concrete, property floods and would cost \$337,000
3. No change
4. Expand the hours of operation at other locations

After some discussion, option 2 was decided. Sawyer replied it would be brought back at the April 20th meeting along with a budget amendment and process.

9.9 Approval of Budget Amendment for repayment of the Margaret Blue
 Pender County portion of the Lower Cape Fear Water
 and Sewer Authority Phased 10-mile Parallel Raw
 Water Line Project for \$581,975.00

Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager, presented the item. Blue explained that there was still an ongoing investigation. The county would receive \$250,000 from the insurance company and the remainder would come from the Fund Balance.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Tate asked if the errors and omissions policy could be increased, with Blue responding she would look into it.

9.10 Approval of MOU Amending 2023 ILA for LCFWASA Margaret Blue

10-Mile Parallel Raw Water Line Project for revised
cost of project

Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager, presented the item. Blue explained that this was for year two's (2) payment of a three (3) year plan. The payment was going from 1.5 million to almost 1.9 million. The agreement allows the County to pay \$581,975 in September 2026 and the balance in September 2027.

Vice Chairman Gerooge made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Tate seconded.
The motion passed unanimously.

10. DISCUSSION

11. APPOINTMENTS

11.1 Appointment to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item. Sholders stated that Carol Stein currently serves on the board and wished to continue her service.

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

Sholders also stated that the Board of Equalization and Review had requested alternates. Leslie Green has previously served on the board and would like to continue to serve.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Tate 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

17.1 Presentation of 2025 State of the County Health Report Carolyn Moser
Carolyn Moser, Health Director, presented the item. Moser went over the activities they participated in with different departments and areas.

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

17.2 Adoption of the Pender County Health Department Carolyn Moser
2025-2030 Strategic Plan

Carolyn Moser, Health Director, presented the item. Moser stated this had to be done every year. This year they came up with four (4) goals and objectives.

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

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 and item six (6) Personnel.

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, reminded every one of the ways they can stay informed.

Tracy Sholders provided an update on the ABC board, the members and term lengths.

Chairman Burton requested an update on the Salty Acres case. Trey Thurman, County Attorney, stated the operator had appealed the Board of Appeals decision. Chairman Burton stated the neighbors needed relief. Thurman stated that if the board wished, he could seek an action for an injunction to require them to cease operations. Commissioner Springer inquired how soon this could be done with Thurman responding this week.

Colby Sawyer also recognized the employees who worked diligently over the holiday weekend.

20. CLOSED SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)

Commissioner Springer made a motion to go into closed session at 10:57pm.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to end closed session at 11:50pm.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

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

22. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman George made a motion to adjourn at 11:52pm.

Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]