Minutes

Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting
Monday, April 20, 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

Chairman Burton led the Invocation.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Springer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Burton opened the floor to Trey Thurman, County Attorney. Thurman tendered his resignation and stated he had spoken with Quinton Morgan and Katie with Hartzog Law Group to make sure everything was covered.

Chairman Burton noted Thurman had served as the County Attorney for almost thirty years. Commissioner Tate expressed his surprise and thanked Thurman for his work.

4. CLOSED SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)

Commissioner Springer made a motion to go into closed session for attorney client privelage at 6:06pm.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to end the closed session at 6:36pm.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

5. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Vice Chairman George made a motion to adopt the agenda.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.

Commissioner Tate and Springer voted affirmatively.
Chairman Burton voted in opposition.
The motion passed 4 to 1.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to waive the rules and to add hiring Hartzog Law Group in the Interim to the agenda.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
Chairman Burton voted affirmatively.
Vice Chairman George and Commissioner Tate voted in opposition.
The motion passed 3 to 2.

Commissioner Tate stated he had never seen such disrespect, hiring a law firm with no contract. He was against this.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

7. PUBLIC INFORMATION

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Quinton Morgan introduced the new attorney and paralegal.
Colby Sawyer introduced the new Emergency Management Director.
Regina Fennell spoke about the reappraisals.
Tom Brown spoke about the Pender EMS & Fire Merger.
Tony Farrier spoke about the reappraisals.
Cindy Moore spoke about the attorney leaving, disrespect amongst the board, and the reappraisals.
Frankie Saunders spoke about the reappraisals.
Lewis Saunders spoke about the reappraisals.

Commissioner Groves stated the Board did not do the reappraisals the company that was hired did and for people to appeal if they thought their information was incorrect. If they push for 8 years, the values are going to be higher.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

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

9.1	Approval of Donation Application for a Flag Pole at the Holly Shelter Shooting Range	Zach White
9.2	Approval of a Budget Ordinance Amendment to increase Holly Shelter Shooting Range Revenue and Expenditures by $2,858.00	Zach White
9.3	Approval of the Board of Commissioners Retreat	Tracy Sholders

Minutes from March 26 and March 27, 2026

9.4 Approval of Board of Commissioner Meeting Minutes from April 7, 2026 — Tracy Sholders

9.5 Approval of contract with AXON for Body Cameras and Tasers for the Pender County Jail — Michael Collier

9.6 Approval of a Purchase Order to Patterson Dental Supply in the amount of $46,394.74 for Equipment and Supplies in the New DHHS Building — Carolyn Moser

9.7 Approval of a Purchase Order to McKesson Medical-Surgical, Inc. in the amount of $60,336.91 for Equipment and Supplies in the New DHHS Building — Carolyn Moser

10. APPROVALS AND RESOLUTIONS

10.1 Approval of the 2026/2027 Housing Administrative Plan — Brianna Martindale

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, presented the item. Sawyer explained that this was an update per HUD requirements.

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

10.2 Approval of Contract for Emergency Services Medical Director — Sarah Fulton

Sarah Fulton, Strategic Director, presented the item. Fulton explained that the contract was needed to update plans and protocols.

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

10.3 Approval of Funding to Pender EMS & Fire for Fire Protection System at Station 9 in the amount of $98,561.00 — Margaret Blue

Sara Fulton, Strategic Director, presented the item. Fulton explained that EMS was currently on 24-hour shifts, and Chief Harraway noticed that the new building did not have sprinklers per code.

Commissioner Springer asked to be recused.

Chairman Burton asked if an RFP was done, with Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager, replying yes.

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

10.4 Approval of Purchase Order for Traffic Signal Design and Construction Management in the amount of $56,340.00 — Nick West

Nick West, Project Manager, presented the item. West explained that as part of the new DHHS building, a stop light was to be placed at the corner of the 117 bypass and US 117 business. An RFQ was published three (3) times with two (2) responses the last time.

Chairman Burton inquired if the bypass and S Walker Street were in Burgaw city limits. West replied yes. Chairman Burton wanted to know why it was needed, with West replying that the State was requiring it. Sarah Fulton, Strategic Director, stated that with the new DHHS building, a TDA was required by the state. The reason was because the County was not going to leave those buildings vacant. DOT is requiring the stop light.

Chairman Burton wanted to know why the county should spend money on something that should have been done a long time ago. Commissioner Groves asked about an appeals process. Fulton explained that numerous county employees over the past 2 years had tried to overturn the stoplight.

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

10.5 Approval of the Hampstead Library Construction Materials Testing Purchase Order in the amount of $114,400.00 — Nick West

Nick West, Project Manager, presented the item. West stated that an RFQ was done with seven (7) responses.

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

10.6 Approval of Funding Request to Pender County Schools for Purchase of Emergency Chiller at Cape Fear Elementary/Middle School in the amount of $256,065.00 — Margaret Blue

Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager, presented the item.

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

10.7 Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment for Montague Convenience Center Site Construction in the — Susan Barnhill

amount of $500,000.00
Colby Sawyer, county manager, presented the item.

Vice Chairman George questioned what the timeline looked like moving forward. Sawyer responded he hoped to have at the first meeting in May. Commissoiner Tate questioned how long it would take to get the site open. Sawyer replied he would get with Mrs. Barnhill and get back to him with a time frame.

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

10.8 Discussion or Action on the 2026 Reappraisal Colby Sawyer
Colby Sawyer, county manager, presented the item. Sawyer provided an update on the reappraisals. As of 3:30pm April 20th, there had been 919 appeals, and 210–220 appointments or walk-ins. Three (3) options were mentioned: a third party would come in and test, desktop reappraisal which would cost between $800,000 and 1 million, or a group of professional assessors could come in for free and review the statistics. Sawyer suggested taking one (1) to two (2) percent sample of the county and measure to see if they are accurate. A rough estimate for this would be around $30 per parcel.

Commissioner Groves made a motion to approve Sawyer sending a letter to the professional assessors.
Comissioner Springer seconded
Commissioner Tate and Chairman Burton voted affirmatively.
Vice Chairman George voted in opposition.
The motion passed 4 to 1.

Vice Chairman George made a motion for the manager to come back with quotes and how samples of each district would be taken.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Sawyer questioned if 5% (2730) of the parcels, looking at all types of properties, was a good sample size, with everyone agreeing.

Commissioner Tate made a motion to add to the May 4th agenda to request Vincent Valuations to amend their contract to remove the $800 a day charge for appeals.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

10.9 Appointment of Hartzog Law Group as interim attorney to the Board of Commissioners
Colby Sawyer, County Manager, presented the item.

Commissioner Groves made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Springer seconded.
Chairman Burton voted affirmatively.
Vice Chairman George and Commissioner Tate voted in opposition.
The motion passed 3 to 2.

11. DISCUSSION

Commissioner Groves spoke about water needs, a playground at Maple Hill and the Montague Convenience Center.

Commissioner Tate spoke about looking at county parks, where they are needed and where repairs are needed. He spoke about water issues.

Chairman Burton welcomed the new employees, said the tax rate would be looked at in the next month or two and would be lowered, and noted the county does not have a revenue problem, it had a spending problem.

12. APPOINTMENTS

13. MAPLE HILL WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

14. ROCKY POINT WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

15. SCOTTS HILL WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

16. MOORE'S CREEK WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

17. CENTRAL PENDER WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

18. PENDER COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

19. SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD

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

21. CLOSED SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)

Trey Thuman, County Attorney, requested the board go into closed session for item three (3), Attorney Client, and six (6), Personnel.

22. 8PM PUBLIC HEARINGS: SPECIAL USE PERMITS/ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS/RESOLUTIONS

22.1 Name Previously Unnamed Roads 'GALA COURT', 'GO BLUE DRIVE', 'PEACH COURT', and 'ZAHM PLACE' — Michael Dickson

Mike Dickson, GIS Analyst, presented the item.

* Clerk's Note: Commissioner Jimmy Tate stepped away.

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

22.2 REZONE 2025-91: Request for a Conditional Use Zoning Map Amendment to rezone approximately 19 acres for the purpose of building 104 townhomes in the Topsail Township. — Virginia Norris

Virginia Norris, Senior Long Range Planner, presented the item.

Vice Chairman George asked what the Unified Development Ordinance said about density. Justin Brantley, Interim Planning Director, replied 5 dwelling units per acre and this project had 19 total acres. Vice Chairman George stated that they are doing more units, with Brantley responding yes.

Alison Engerbretson with Paramount Engineer, spoke about the project and noted the town homes would have two (2) car garages with 2 car parking spaces and forty (40) extra parking spaces within the project. The project was to be built in two phases, with phase one being move in ready the first half of 2028.

Johnathan Guy with Kimley Horn stated that phase one (1) of the bypass was going to have a foundational impact on the community and that a TIA was not required by NCDOT.

Landon Weaver of Bill Clark Homes noted these would be for sale, not rent, and they were trying to do something in the mid range for people. The increase in density was due to the cost of the pump station, water and sewer. To make the town home more affordable, they needed to build more.

Public Comment:
Kirt Rusenko spoke about traffic.
Bryce Morrison spoke about his property being a conservation area.
Cameron London spoke about traffic.
Ann Jones spoke about the neighborhood being historically a black neighborhood.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to deny based on the increased density, traffic, school data being inaccurate, and the Planning Board denying the application.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

22.3 REZONE 2025-92: Request for a Conditional Use — Marcy Waters

Zoning Map Amendment to rezone approximately 55 acres for the purpose of building 85 single family homes in the Long Creek Township.

Marcy Waters, Long Range Planner, presented the item.

Tom Harvey with Cline Donaldson, stated the project would be 1 1/2 units per acre, no lots would come in contact with the wetlands, local schools had capacity, there would be low impact on traffic, and it is below the recommended density.

Brett Barefoot with Marsh Engineering Services, stated they had worked with the county and the developer to come up with a plan for the area.

Chairman Burton questioned if they would be saving trees. Harvey explained that the wetlands were mostly full of timber. Vice Chairman George asked about the width of the road and whether road parking was going to be allowed. Barefoot replied there would be no street parking allowed. Commissioner Grove stated Rural Agricultural zoning requires 1 acre per dwelling, with Harvey replying that was not feasible with the wetlands on the parcel.

Public Comment:
Jennifer Hornacek asked the board to deny.
Jeff Pitts spoke in favor of the project.
Anthony Green spoke in favor of the project.
Dylan Taylor spoke in favor of the project.
Cory Lahnum spoke in favor of the project.
BJ Roughton spoke about flooding in the area.
David Latham spoke about flooding in the area.
Harry Lewis spoke about water and developers.

Commissioner Groves made a motion to deny based on septic systems, a rising creek and the project does not fit in the area.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
Vice Chair George and Commissioner Springer voted affirmatively.
Chairman Burton voted in opposition.
The motion passed 4 to 1.

22.4	REZONE 2025-94: General Use Zoning Map Amendment to rezone an 11.36-acre portion of three tracts of land from the PD, Planned Development, zoning district, and the RP, Residential Performance, zoning district to the GB, General Business, zoning district in the Topsail Township.	Sean Olds

Justin Brantley, Interim Planning Director, presented the case.

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

22.5	Zoning Text Amendment ZTA 2026-34: Request for a Zoning Text Amendment to amend Section 7.10.5, Surfacing, to allow for more options for surfacing materials.	Virginia Norris

Virginia Norris, Senior Long Range Planner, presented the item.

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

23. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman George made a motion to adjourn at 10:44pm.
Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]