Minutes

Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting
Monday, May 18, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Pender County Hampstead Annex
15060 Hwy 17, Hampstead, NC 28433

PRESENT:	Vice Chair Brad George Commissioner Jerry Groves Chairman Randy Burton Commissioner Brent Springer
ABSENT:	
OTHER PRESENT:	Colby Sawyer, County Manager Margaret Blue, Assistant County Manager Katie Barber-Jones, Hartzog Law Group 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 6t:00pm.

2. INVOCATION

   Commission Groves led the Invocation.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

   Chairman Burton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

   Commissioner Springer made a motion to excuse Commissioner Tate from the meeting.
   Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
   The motion passed unanimously.

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

5. PUBLIC HEARING

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

   Debbie Walker spoke about water.
   Tom Wartz spoke about road naming.

   Commissioner Springer asked Colby Sawyer, County Manager, if the county had paid for a lobbyist for water. Saywer replied it is paid out for a year. Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager/Finance Director, said there were funds in the budget. Commissioner Springer asked to find a lobbyist to help with water for the county. Chairman Burton noted that there had been some movement on the water issue.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

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

8.1	Approval of the Board of Commissioners Minutes from the Special meetings on April 13, April 23, April 27, and April 30, 2026	Tracy Sholders
8.2	Approval of the Board of Commissioners Minutes from the regular meeting on April 20, 2026	Tracy Sholders
8.3	Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment and transfer of revenue to expenditures in the amount of $43,892.88 from Sedgwick for vehicle accidents	Alan Cutler
8.4	Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment and Transfer of revenue funds to expenditures in the amount of $5,869.22 from Sedgwick for a vehicle accident	James Proctor
8.5	Approval of a Budget Amendment to Increase Health Department Revenues and Expenditures in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 in the amount of $27,355.00	Carolyn Moser
8.6	Refund/Release Requests for items meeting N.C.G.S. **§** 105-381	Jessica Hudson

9. APPROVALS AND RESOLUTIONS

9.1	Resolution Supporting the Proposed Medical School at UNC Wilmington	Colby Sawyer

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, presented the item.

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

9.2	Approval of Updated Project Ordinance, Purchase	Susan Barnhill

Order to Leak & Associates for Transfer Station Improvement Construction, and Budget Ordinance Amendment to Transfer Additional $106,000.00 from Solid Waste Fund Balance

Susan Barnhill, Solid Waste Director, presented the item. Barnhill explained the funds were coming from the solid waste fund balance and would be used to redo the pit, raise the floor and work on the bulk head.

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

9.3 Approval of Purchase Order for Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment for the LEC project in the amount of $925,036.59 — Nick West

Nick West, Project Manager, presented the item. West stated the new Law Enforcement Center (LEC) was expected to be completed in August and this was for the furniture, delivery and installation and was on a state contract.

Commissioner Springer questioned if the handrail situation had been resolved. West replied, yes, with additional cost. They are going to place a screen from the handrail to the ceiling. Commissioner Springer inquired if any old furniture would be moving to the new LEC building, with West responding very little.

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

9.4 Approval to Accept Insurance Revenue from Accident in the amount of $14,638.43, related Budget Ordinance Amendment for the Transfer of General Fund Balance, and Purchase Order to Trent Cadillac, for the Purchase of Emergency Management Replacement Vehicle for a total of $85,900.00 — Tommy Batson

Tommy Batson, Emergency Management Director, presented the item. Batson explained the individual was on the way to a non-emergency call when they hit a deer, and they were doing the speed limit.

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

10. DISCUSSION

10.1 Discussion on potential tree ordinance changes — Colby Sawyer

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, presented the item. Sawyer explained the process would be staff, Planning Board, Board of County Commissioners, and then text amendment and the Unified Development Ordinance changes.

Chairman Burton requested the county be proactive with developers and the age of the trees.

Vice Chairman George noted there were a limited number on the protected list, requested commercial tree mitigation be expanded into residential developments, and go back to when they get the permits they can clear-cut. There is a lot of clear-cutting, and then it sits for years before they do anything. When they have to plant trees back, they should be held responsible to make sure they live. Commissioner Springer suggested a fine in the same amount that it would cost to replace the trees. Katie Barber-Jones, County Attorney, mentioned incentives, as they are easier to defend.

11. APPOINTMENTS

11.1 Appointment to the Pender County Firefighters Relief Fund Board — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to appoint Amy Burton and Todd Morrison to the Pender County Firefighters Relief Fund Board.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

11.2 Appointment to the ABC Board — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to appoint Amery Wells (D4) and Tim Baker (D3) to the ABC Board.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

11.3 Appointment to the Library Board — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to vacate a previous seat due to district misalignment and appoint Ashley Milam to the Library Board.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

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

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to approve Michael Moser.
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

18.1	Approval of the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program Policy for Pender County	Rich Blankenship

Rich Blankenship, DSS Director, presented the item.

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, explained that this just prioritizes the order in which groups get funds.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Groves and Chairman Burton voted affirmatively.
Commissioner Springer voted in opposition.

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

Katie Barber-Joners stated bill 889 had passed the Senate and was now in the House and would keep everyone updated.

Colby mentioned the ribbon cutting on May 28th at 10am at the new DHHS building and he had personnel items for the closed session.

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the board, suggested she filter the applicants for district positions before being presented to the board.

Commissioner Groves stated that the county has to have money and there had been some outrageous requests, and he was saying no to the budget.

Vice Chairman George stated he had attended the last Kiwanis concert in the park, and it was huge. There was a bill regarding E-bikes in the General Assembly that was not going to help the counties as it gives municipalities restrictions.

Chairman Burton encouraged all to reach out to pass the 889 bill.

20. CLOSED SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)

Commissioner Springer made a motion to go into closed session at 6.54pm.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to end closed session at 7:43pm.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

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

21.1 Name an unnamed road 'Backwoods Drive' — Michael Dickson

Mike Dickson, GIS Analyst, presented the item.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to open the public hearing.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to close the public hearing.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

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

21.2 Name an unnamed road 'Full Cry Lane' — Michael Dickson

Mike Dickson, GIS Analyst, presented the item.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to open the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

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

Commissioner Springer made a motion to close the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

21.3 Name an unnamed road 'Wurz Avenue' — Michael Dickson

Mike Dickson, GIS Analyst, presented the item.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to open the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to approve

Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to close the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

21.4	REZONE 2026-95: Request to rezone approximately 1.65 acres from the PD, Planned Development, zoning district to the O&I, Office and Institutional, zoning district in the Topsail Township.	Marcy Waters

Commissioner Springer made a motion to open the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Marcy Waters, Long Range Planner, presented the item. Commissioner Springer asked about buffers. Waters responded that buffers would be the ones required. Commissioner Springer inquired if it was a sustainable buffer to protect neighbors. Vice Chairman George replied there were no neighbors close by. Matt Nichols, Attorney for the Applicant, was there to speak if needed.

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

Commissioner Springer made a motion to close the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman Geroge seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

21.5	SUP 2026-57: Request for a Special Use Permit to allow for a landscaping business in the Rocky Point Township.	Sean Olds

Katie Barber-Jones, County Attorney, swore in all speakers.

Justin Brantley, Assistant Planning Director, presented the item.

Michael Resh, the applicant, stated it was a small business that had been in business about 15 years, had 5 crew with about 15 employees. They carpooled. Would come in the morning to pick up equipment and back in the afternoon to drop off and get their vehicles. They are a design firm and store their equipment inside. They did not store chemicals on site, they only had what they needed for the day.

Stephen Boyett spoke against the application.

Commissioner Groves asked the applicant if there were any environmental concerns. Resh responded no, he had been at the current location for 10 years without any incidents. Commissioner Springer questioned if chemicals would be stored on site, with Resh responding no, they pick up what they need each day.

Commissioner Spring made a motion to close the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer asked about buffers. Brantley explained the different buffers; the applicant stated there would be a fence with no retail done. Commissioner Springer questioned the type of fence. The applicant stated it was would slates with metal in between.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to reopen the Public Hearing to capture the above information.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to close the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to approve.
Commissioner Groves seconded the motion.
Chairman Burton voted affirmatively.
Vice Chairman George voted in opposition.
The motion passed 3 to 1.

21.6 ZTA 2026-35: Zoning Text Amendment to allow Hotels in the Industrial Districts. — Marcy Waters

Marcy Waters, Long Range Planner, presented the item.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to open the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to close the Public Hearing.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

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

22. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Springer made a motion to adjourn at 9:01pm.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]