# Minutes

**Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting**
**Monday, June 1, 2026 at 6:00 PM**
**Pender County Health & Human Resources Building**
**298 Progress Drive, 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
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 6:00pm.

2. INVOCATION

Commissioner Groves led the Invocation.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Groves led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

5. PUBLIC HEARING

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION

6.1 Novant Health Update — Ruth Glaser

Ruth Glaser, President of Novant Health Pender Medical Center, presented the item. Glaser gave an update on the commitment made by Novant Health at the time of the sale in 2023. That commitment consisted of investing $50 million over 10 years in the hospital and to create a community general hospital within five (5) years. Glaser advised that the Scotts Hill Medical Center would open June 16, 2026.

Commissioner Tate asked if they were looking at other areas of faculty, such as the ones the Health Department identified with the growing illnesses. Glaser responded yes, and they were excited about UNC Wilmington possibly bringing a medical campus to Wilmington to help with that.

6.2 Emergency Services Merger Update Sarah Fulton

Sarah Fulton, Strategic Director, introduced Chief Grayson. Grayson noted that the merger had over 206 tasks, of which 95 percent are complete or in progress for completion. July 5, 2026, is still the merger effective date.

Vice Chairman George asked if, in the new legal document, are the protections for the employees and services the same as the MOU? Grasyon replied that they carried over. Vice Chairman George noted that there would be no lapse in insurance coverage, but questioned the deductible. Pam Brame, replied that since it was a new company, the deductible would start over. Vice Chairman George questioned if the no movement and no change in service was changed from one (1) year to six (6) months. Grayson replied he would have to check as he was not aware of discussion on that. Commissioner Tate questioned if retirees and employees with 20 years or longer of service had been contacted about their 401K and retirement. Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager/Finance Director, replied they had contacted anyone at least 55 with 20 years of service. Blue also noted she was working on the calculations for each individual to make adjustments. Blue noted the potential solution was a contract with these individuals that if they were to retire on or before five (5) years from the effective date of the merger, then the county could make a one (1) time contribution of the difference between what they would have had from PEMS & Fire to what they would be getting. This would not give them the contribution that is made to the local government retirement system. Chairman Burton questioned how many employees this affected, with Blue replying eight (8). Chairman Burton clarified that if the employees made it five years from the effective date of the merger they would end up with two (2) retirements, one from PEMS & Fire and one from the Local Government.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Brown spoke about the legacy of the Board of Commissioners.
Cheryl Highsmith spoke about sepsis and clean water.

Commissioner Tate requested Sawyer and Proctor to get with Ms. Highsmith and maybe have a community meeting on the water situation. Proctor explained that each well depth for clean water depends on the topography of the land. Commissioner Tate also asked them to look at the agreement with the Town of Harrell’s and have some possible solutions by the next meeting on June 15, 2026. Commissioner Groves stated he had been fighting for water for three years. Commissioner Groves noted that he had a conversation with Proctor and Sawyer, and they assured him they were not running any more lines because there was not enough people and no money. Three (3) or four (4) people are not important. Commissioner Tate expressed his upset at hearing this. Sawyer asked the Chairman for a recess.

The Board took a recess from 7:08pm to 7:18pm.

Commissioner Groves stated that it seemed like something he said struck a nerve. Commissioner Groves never said who said what and the county manager did not say anyone was not important.

Kay Davis spoke about school buildings and the funding needed.

Cindy Moore spoke about needing an update on a park for Maple Hill and the length of the tax appeals.

Commissioner Tate questioned how long it should be before citizens hear something on their appeal. Jessica Hudson, Co-Interim Tax Administrator, stated they were going out in batches, and they had released the third batch that day. Hudson stated 1,000 should be out by the next week.

Louis Saunders spoke about the tax appraisals and wanted the true cost of the Post vs the Star News.

Julie Rowland spoke about an update to ordinance 6.6, dealing with feral cats and cat populations.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

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

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| 8.1 | Approval of the Board of Commissioners Budget Session Meeting Minutes from May 7, 11, and 14, 2026 | Tracy Sholders |
| 8.2 | Approval of the Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes from May 4, 2026 | Tracy Sholders |
| 8.3 | Approval of the 2026 Energy Outreach Plan | Rich Blankenship |
| 8.4 | Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment to increase Holly Shelter Shooting Range Revenues and Expenditures by $3,519.00 | Zach White |
| 8.5 | Approval of Purchase Orders to Capital Ford Raleigh in the amount of $48,795.50 and Batteries of NC for $39,793.08 for the purchase of a 2026 Ford Transit Jail Transport and related upfit | Alan Cutler |
| 8.6 | Approval of Purchase Order to Town Police Supply in the amount of $39,722.40 for the purchase of rifles for sworn personnel | Alan Cutler |
| 8.7 | Approval of Purchase Order to Fairway Ford for the purchase of a 2026 Ford F-150 4X4 in the amount of $43,929.00 for Animal Control | Alan Cutler |

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| 8.8 | Approval of the annual plan for the Pender County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) | Dee Turner |
| 8.9 | Motor Vehicle Releases and Refunds | Jessica Hudson |
| 8.10 | Approval of Lease for Emergency Services Fleet Facility | Sarah Fulton |

9. APPROVALS AND RESOLUTIONS

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| 9.1 | Resolution Authorizing Participation in Opioid Settlements | Colby Sawyer |

Colby Sawyer, County Manager, presented the item.

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

10. DISCUSSION

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

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| 17.1 | Board of Health Rule Policy Review | Carolyn Moser |

Carolyn Moser, Health Director, presented the item. Moser noted that in the past, the Commissioners had elected not to pass any rules because they would be more stringent than the states. Chairman Burton suggested any issue be brought to the Board on a case by case basis.

Commissioner Springer requested Sawyer to have the agent come to the next meeting to discuss drugs. Sawyer replied he would.

18. SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD

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

Sawyer stated the new budget would be on the next agenda with a .02 cent increase in taxes.

Commissioner Groves stated he would not agree to increasing taxes.

Commissioner Tate stated the budget was an insult to the taxpayers, with the inaccuracies from the appeals not fixed. Tate noted he was speechless over the water plan and suggested he and Commissioner Groves go to Raleigh for help.

Commissioner Groves made a motion to suspend the rules.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
Chairman Burton and Vice Chairman George voted affirmatively.
Commissioner Springer abstained.
The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Groves made a motion to refund the money to those who had paid for water years ago with 3% interest.

Commissioner Tate asked if the motion was sustained, would that take them out of sequence? He does not want them to have to pay the current rate of $5,350 to hook up if water becomes available. Vice Chairman George asked for the attorney to advise on the legalities. Barber-Jones suggested the staff present the implications at the next meeting. The commitments made in the past, as well as new commitments, need to be looked at if the money is to be refunded.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to table it until the 6/15 meeting with more information.

Commissioner Groves amended his motion to refund the money to those who had paid for water years ago with 3% interest and changed it to staff to gather information and bring it back at the 6/15 meeting.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Burton noted that bill 889 was sitting in the house with no movement or word.

20. CLOSED SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)

Vice Chairman George made a motion to enter into closed session at 8:02pm.
Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to end closed session at 8:50pm.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

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

22. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Springer made a motion to adjourn at 8:50pm.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]