Minutes

Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting
Monday, July 13, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Pender County Hampstead Annex
15060 Hwy 17, Hampstead, NC 28443

PRESENT: Commissioner Jerry Groves
Chairman Randy Burton
Commissioner Brent Springer
Commissioner Jimmy T. Tate
Vice Chair Brad George

ABSENT:

OTHER PRESENT: Colby Sawyer, County Manager
Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager
Sarah Fulton, 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

   Chairman Burton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

   Colby Sawyer, County Manager, asked for item 9.4 to be removed and to add item 11a 6 personnel to the closed session.

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

5. PUBLIC HEARING

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION

6.1 Trillium Health Resources — Lauren Oxendine

Victoria Jackson with Trillium Health Resources presented the item. Trillium Health is one (1) of four (4) public health plans in North Carolina. They have attended over 250 Pender County engagements since April 2025 and have served 1974 individuals.

Commissioner Tate inquired where the biggest increase was in Pender County, with Jackson responding, mental health. Commissioner Tate asked if they would attend joint meetings in the Western side of the county to let people know what services they offered. Jackson responded yes.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

* Samenthia Jones spoke about water.
* Debbie Walker spoke about clean water.
* Cheryl Highsmith spoke about treated water.
* Thomas Brown spoke about the statement read by Chairman prior to public comments and the personnel agenda of the board.
* Paul Lowman - no response
* John Filippi had three questions: 1. What happened to the $650,000 lost in the hack? 2. The county took over EMS, took over 10-12 million in debt? Why? 3. Commissioners did not approve the budget in time and lost $140,000 in funds. This could have helped with the water issue.
* Cynthia Tart representing the Parks & Recreation Board, please look at the replacement costs when purchasing items.
* Dee Turner thanked Vice Chairman George for his service and spoke about the park lights.
* Greg Capsman with Topsail Baseball Club spoke about the lights at Kiwanis Park.
* Betty Schoonmaker spoke about Union Rescue.
* Charlie Schoonmaker spoke about people in Willard being happy and thanked the county for their help.
* Susan Croom spoke about going to the NC General Assembly with impact fees for Pender County.
* Tim Zizack spoke about increasing sales tax by .25 percent. This would cover the 2.7 million from the general fund used for the schools.
* Cindy Moore spoke about a Maple Hill park.

Commissioner Tate stated he had received inquiries as to why he did not respond to the comments from the last meeting. Tate replied that when records speak for themselves, he does not need to argue with facts.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Groves asked for items 8.19, 8.20 and 8.21 to be pulled for discussion.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to approve the agenda with the moving of items 8.19, 8.20 and item 8.21 to the end of the Approvals and Resolutions section.
Commisstioner Groves seconded the motion.
Chairman Burton and Commissioner Tate voted affirmatively.
Vice Chairman George voted in opposition.
The motion passed 4 to 1.

8.1	Approval of Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes from June 1 and June 15, 2026	Tracy Sholders
8.2	Approval to Revise FY 2026-2027 Fee Schedule	Margaret Blue
8.3	Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment to Recognize Revenue in Fuel Depots	Margaret Blue
8.4	Motor Vehicle Releases and Refunds	Jessica Hudson
8.5	Refund/Release Requests for items meeting NC G.S. 105-381	Jessica Hudson
8.6	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #673 in the amount of $26,839.36	Tommy Batson
8.7	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #645 in the amount of $80,000.00	James Proctor
8.8	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #658 in the amount of $29,300.00	James Proctor

8.9	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #710 in the amount of $60,000.00	James Proctor
8.10	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #419 in the amount of $130,830.00	James Proctor
8.11	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #648 in the amount of $103,200.00	James Proctor
8.12	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Various Purchase Orders for Centralized Maintenance	James Proctor
8.13	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #666 in the amount of $29,307.59	Zach White
8.14	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #102 in the amount of $5,552.00	Zach White
8.15	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #744 in the amount of $59,887.20	Wyatt Richardson
8.16	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #506 in the amount of $55,432.00	Marcel Miranda
8.17	Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #504 in the amount of $16,650.00	Marcel Miranda

8.18 Approval to Carry Over and Re-Budget Purchase Order #679 in the amount of $1,750.00 — Marcel Miranda

8.19 Approval of Blanket Purchase Order to Fortiline Waterworks $500,000.00 — James Proctor

As noted above, this item was moved to item 9.4

James Procter, Interim Utilities Director, presented the item. Procter explained that the three companies in items 8.19, 8.20 and 8.21 were the ones the utility department used for their maintenance supplies for a year. It depended on the lead time on who they ordered from each time and that if the meters were not purchased, they could not be installed/replaced. This would result in the collection of less revenue. The utility department currently installs or replaces between 800–900 meters a year.

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

8.20 Approval of Blanket Purchase Order for Ferguson Waterworks for $275,000.00 — James Proctor

As noted above, this item was moved to item 9.5

James Procter, Interim Utilities Director, presented the item. Procter explained that the three companies in items 8.19, 8.20 and 8.21 were the ones the utility department used for their maintenance supplies for a year. It depended on the lead time on who they ordered from each time and that if the meters were not purchased, they could not be installed/replaced. This would result in the collection of less revenue. The utility department currently installs or replaces between 800–900 meters a year.

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

8.21 Approval of Blanket Purchase Order to Core & Main in the amount of $125,000.00 — James Proctor

As noted above, this item was moved to item 9.6

James Procter, Interim Utilities Director, presented the item. Procter explained that the three companies in items 8.19, 8.20 and 8.21 were the ones the utility department used for their maintenance supplies for a year. It depended on the lead time on who they ordered from each time and that if the meters were not purchased, they could not be installed/replaced. This would result in the collection of less revenue. The utility department currently installs or replaces between 800–900 meters a year.

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

9. APPROVALS AND RESOLUTIONS

9.1 Approval of Athletic Field Lighting Final Phase capital project, Budget Ordinance Amendment, and Approval of Purchase Order in the amount of $1,612,589.00 — Zach White

Zach White, Parks & Recreation Director, presented the item. White explained that this was the final phase to put all the fields on the same system. This was for the last six, oldest, fields.

Commissioner Springer questioned when the project would start and the sustainability of the lights. White responded that the lights would last 25 to 30 years. Musco lights were used in other areas and there had been no issues. The company could be here mid to late October to start installation of the lights. Commissioner Springer inquired how long it would take for them to be installed with White responding a week and a half for all.

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

9.2 Approval of a Purchase Order for County-Wide Physical Security Refresh (Phase 2) to Nitor E LLC in the Amount of $502,654.00 — Marcel Miranda

Marcel Miranda, IT Director, presented the item. Miranda noted that this would put all physical security for the county under one (1) system, making it easier to manage. This included a price lock until August 1. After that, there would be a 30% increase in the cost.

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

9.3 Approval of Fleet Garage Phase 1B for Zoning and Geotechnical work in the amount of $106,150.00 — Sarah Fulton

Sarah Fulton, Assistant County Manager, presented the item. Fulton explained this was to add $106,105 to the Fleet Garage for Phase 1B for Zoning and Geotechnical work.

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

9.4 Proposed Amendment to the Atkinson Fire Protection Contract — Colby Sawyer

As noted above, this item was removed from the agenda.

10. DISCUSSION

11. APPOINTMENTS

11.1 Appointment to the Southeastern Economic Development Commission — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item. The Southeastern Economic Development Commission had one opening starting 8/1/26 with six (6) applications received. Sholders read the list of applicants and their qualifications.

Vice Chairman George made a motion to appoint Kelly Brantley to the commission.
Commissioner Tate seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

11.2 Appointment to the Tourism Development Board — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item. The Tourism Development Board had one opening for District two (2) with one (1) application received. Sholders read the applicant's qualifications.

Commissioner Springer Made a Motion to appoint Kristin Freeman to the board.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

11.3 Appointment to the Board of Adjustment — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item. Due to the difficulty with filling this board, there was some discussion about making the board an at-large board. However, the Commissioners decided that if there were candidates from districts that needed filling, those should be thought of first before going to an at-large board/position.

The Board of Adjustment had two vacancies, one in District three (3) and one in District (5). Six (6) applications were received. Sholders read the list of applicants and their qualifications.

Commissioner Springer made a motion to appoint Jenni Grafford and Robert Rodenberg.
Vice Chairman George seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

11.4 Appointment to Cape Fear Council of Governments (CFCOG) — Tracy Sholders

Tracy Sholders, Clerk to the Board, presented the item. The Cape Fear Council of Government had an opening since Commissioner Springer resigned. The board could appoint a new member to the CFCOG BOD, appoint Commissioner Groves as the primary, or have Commissioner Groves continue as the alternate.

The board made the decision to leave Commissioner Groves as the alternate until the new board comes on board.

12. MAPLE HILL WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

James Proctor, Interim Utilities Director, stated that Brunswick County and New Hanover County had implemented water restrictions. Pender County is currently at a D2 which does not require restrictions, but D3 would. Proctor suggested making an announcement suggesting citizens not use sprinklers during the day, run washing machines and dishwashers with full loads, do not let sinks just run, fix leaks, and do not wash vehicles.

Proctor stated he had been given information on two (2) companies identified to bring to the Board for approval for an environmental grant lobbyist for utilities and would be bringing them to the board in the future.

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

Colby Sawyer stated that the Fire Marshal's office advised that Pender County is now considered a High Hazard County and a burn permit is now required year round if you are going to burn within 500 feet of brush. Sawyer asked the Board if they still wished to hold the Town Halls on July 21st and 23rd. The Board agreed to continue with the Town Halls. Sawyer thanked staff for their help with the fire at the Sheriff's office and the Register of Deeds and Tax move.

Commissioner Groves stated Fuquay-Varina was still holding off on the water. Groves noted he was still working on water, ditches, paved roads, a park for Maple Hill, and the Long Creek Convenience Center. Groves asked Sawyer for an update on the Long Creek Convenience Center. Sawyer replied the County was working through the TRC and permitting process now and addressing some environmental considerations. Chairman Burton asked for an update to be placed on social media regarding this. Groves also mentioned he was working on some stop lights.

Vice Chairman George thanked everyone for their support over the last three and half (3.5) years. George said there is a lot to be done and looks forward to seeing what comes.

Commissioner Tate asked Colby Sawyer to provide an update on the Tax and Register of Deeds being closed. Sawyer explained the building was closed due to damage, and the offices were being moved to the old health building. Sawyer hoped to have a timeline out by the next morning. Tate stated Montaque was important and wanted to have meetings in that area to explain the delay to the citizens. Tate asked for the county to help Mrs. Hornececk with the challenges of accessing her property and why Surf City has to pay extra to use the convenience sites.

Chairman Burton stated the board had received a thank-you note from Sarah Fulton's sister and the school board. Burton requested an update on Pansy Lane. Burton noted the community's concern over nothing being done on 421, but he remembered Mr. Colon, past Utility Director, applying for a grant and being turned down due to the county tier. Burton stated the state needed to redo the tier so the county as well as the schools could receive the grants needed.

Commissioner Groves asked if the county issued any permits for the event that Salty Acres held over the weekend. Sawyer replied no. Groves asked for any updates on the case. Katie Barber-Jones stated the firm was moving forward with the next stage of the lawsuit and was gathering information from neighbors and witnesses.

Recess 7:59pm to 8:12pm

20. CLOSED SESSION (IF APPLICABLE)

Commissioner Springer made a motion to enter into closed session at 8:15pm.
Commission Tate seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

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

20.1	GS 143-318.11 (a) (3) Attorney Client Privilege	Colby Sawyer
20.2	GS 143-318.11 (a) (7) Criminal Investigation	Colby Sawyer

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

21.1	Petition to Name a Road in the Topsail Township W M TEACHEY AVENUE	Michael Dickson

Mike Dickson, GIS Analyst, presented the item. Dickson explained that the two (2) neighbors on the street agreed to the name of W M Teachey Avenue.

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

22. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman George made a motion to adjourn at 9:03pm.
Commissioner Springer seconded the motion.
The motion passed unanimously.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]