



Minutes

Board of County Commissioners Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 23, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Pender County Public Assembly Room
805 S. Walker Street, Burgaw, NC

PRESENT:

ABSENT: Commissioner Jerry Groves

OTHER PRESENT: Colby Sawyer, County Manager
Meg Blue, Assistant County Manager
Other Staff and Members of the Press and Public

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Burton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. DISCUSSION

Chairman Burton opened the town hall by thanking the citizens for coming and then opened the floor for discussion.

A citizen questioned the traffic on Country Club Road and what the county was going to do about it. Chairman Burton responded it was a challenge; the County has little to do with roads and has been behind in roads for over 20 years. The state would need to be lobbied for the traffic.

A citizen had spoken with the Mayor of Burgaw, and they stated that the DOT was looking for input on any changes in the future to the area. Chairman Burton replied that there is a representative on the WMPO who helps set up roadways and can help set up the future.

A citizen wanted to know what the traffic plans were going to be for the new Wal-Mart in Hampstead. Chairman Burton responded that the DOT probably had things in place to help. He suspects a super street with a median.

A citizen from Rocky Point wanted to know why Falls Mist, a coming subdivision, had no dedicated turn lanes to the development with an additional 500 cars on the road and no retention ponds. Justin Brantley, Interim Planning Director, explained that Falls Mist was under review and did not have a DOT permit currently. The citizen stated they already had culverts and ditches. Brantley replied they were allowed to clear the property. James Proctor, Interim Utilities Director, stated the discharge would be released on 21 acres of land. The citizen asked why the county keeps approving neighborhoods, with Chairman Burton explaining they could

deny a by right development.

A citizen questioned how the south transfer station road development was going in without a traffic study. Brantley explained that the county does not have control over the roads, the county has control over zoning of the property and this development was zoned by right. Brantley stated the DOT would review and decide what was needed but that the DOT was not required to fix existing problems, they are responsible for traffic that would be added. The citizen asked how this got changed, with Brantley replying through DOT funding. The citizen inquired when this project was expected to be done. Brantley replied in about five (5) years. Chairman Burton asked when the project started. Brantley responded in 2010.

A citizen stated it sounded like there was no communication between DOT and Planning. Vice Chairman George explained that DOT and Planning do communicate but that he believes DOT looks at each individual project rather than the area.

A citizen stated there was no consistency with taxes and other states were successfully moving away from taxes. He wanted to know how the approved property value was calculated. The individual stated that citizens cannot afford to pay property tax on social security. Commissioner Tate stated the board understood the re-appraisal issues, to not wait eight (8) years for a re-evaluation and to have these discussions earlier. Vice Chairman George noted appraisals are going up due to sales prices.

A citizen stated others needed to contact Representative Carson Smith for help with these items.

A citizen stated the taxes came with the vendor fraud and questioned where the county was at with the fraud. Chairman Burton stated the tax issue had nothing to do with the fraud. Colby Sawyer, County Manager, replied the ACH Fraud case was not related; it was utility dollars, not tax dollars. The county had recovered \$250,000 from insurance and the State Bureau and others were still investigating the case.

A citizen thanked everyone for having the town halls. He also thanked Proctor for the information on the water plant near Washington Acres and asked if he could provide an update. Proctor stated they were working on land easement negotiations with Walmart to have access to 210 for sewer for the school. They are working on NCDEQ on Mill Creek discharge (minerals). In the next 90 days, they are hoping to have bids for well fields. Construction would start in about 6 to 7 months; it will take 18 months to get pipe in the ground and be operational by late 2028 or early 2029.

A citizen spoke about the wastewater plant that is supposed to be going near Castle Bay and asked for it to be put someplace where it would be the least disruptive.

A citizen asked if Planning & Zoning could do anything about the builder behind his property putting a 6-foot fence one foot from his fence. Brantley replied that Planning and Zoning does not regulate fences but could reach out to the developer due to wildlife possibly getting stuck. The citizen asked about the developer making their property higher than his. Brantley stated the developer had gone above requirements to help move water through and across Scotts Hill

Loop Road.

A citizen questioned flock cameras, what information they obtained, how it was used and who had access to the information. Chairman Burton responded it was used by the Sheriff's office for safety. The citizen stated it has been used for the wrong purpose before and how do we know what is going on with the cameras.

A citizen spoke about the lack of signage on Country Club Road in Hampstead. Vice Chairman George stated the DOT scrapped the 3-way stop due to the angle of the turn and buses not being able to turn if someone was at the intersection waiting to turn. George stated that most of the lights on Sloop Point are paid for by the developers. The citizen also stated they would like the local paper back instead of the Wilmington Star News.

A citizen noted they had been working on Hoover Road, and almost all the ditches were gone and wanted to know who to talk to about it. Chairman Burton responded he would need to speak with DOT. Vice Chairman George suggested he call Jessie Leonard with DOT.

A citizen stated DOT had knocked his shed down on his property. They spoke on a Friday and said they would take care of it. On the following Monday, they told him to sue them to get his money. The citizen is in talks with their attorney. DOT suggested he clean up their mess, and they would pay him for it. The citizen states there is no accountability with DOT. Chairman Burton stated the DOT tries, but they can do some things that citizens cannot do.

A citizen suggested the solution to the traffic was to bore underground tunnels.

Vice Chairman George looked up the money going to road projects this year. Pender County is in District 3, which will receive 31 million. Pender County is receiving less since they were already getting so much money for the bypass.

A citizen spoke about timed lights. Vice Chairman George noted that it was on the WMPO's list. Chairman Burton noted that the City of Wilmington Engineer had someone that monitored the lights and could change them in real time if they needed to change the traffic.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]