

**BRUNSWICK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OFFICIAL MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
GOALS WORKSHOP
January 20, 2026
9:00 A.M.**

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session on the above date at 9:00 a.m., Commissioners' Chambers, David R. Sandifer Administration Building, County Government Center, Bolivia, North Carolina.

PRESENT: Commissioner Mike Forte, Chairman
Commissioner J. Martin Cooke, Vice-Chairman
Commissioner Randy Thompson
Commissioner Pat Sykes
Commissioner Frank Williams

STAFF: Steve Stone, County Manager
Bryan Batton, County Attorney
David Stanley, Deputy County Manager
Niel Brooks, Deputy County Manager
Aaron Smith, Finance Director
Daralyn Spivey, Clerk to the Board
LeAnn Weigand, Executive Assistant
Meagan Kascsak, Communications Director
Currie Elkins, IT
Lt. Raynor, Sheriff's Office

Board Action, containing all items in this set of minutes, is filed within the Clerk to the Board's office.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Forte called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

II. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice – Chairman Cooke gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ADJUSTMENTS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the agenda with the understanding that changes may occur without notice. Vice - Chairman Cooke seconded the motion and passed unanimously (5 to 0).

IV. PRESENTATIONS

1. Register of Deeds – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Dana Varnum presented the goals and objectives for the Register of Deeds for FY27.

2. Engineering – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Bill Pinnix and Brigit Flora presented the goals and objectives for Engineering for FY27.

3. Soil & Water - FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Elliot Swain presented the goals and objectives for Soil & Water for FY27.

4. Operation Services - FY 26/27 Goals and Objectives

Robert Billingham presented the goals and objectives for Operation Services for FY27.

Grand Strand MPO Transportation Advisory Committee: Commissioner Thompson and Commissioner Sykes will maintain their seats.

Greater Wilmington Metro Transportation Advisory Committee: Commissioner Williams with Chairman Forte as the alternate will remain.

Health and Human Advisory Board: Vice Chairman Cooke will remain.

JCPC: Vice - Chairman Cooke will remain in that role and if the by-laws allow, Commissioner Sykes will sit as an alternate.

Local Emergency Protection Committee: Vice – Chairman Cooke will remain.

Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority: Commissioner Williams will remain.

Trillium Regional Board: Vice - Chairman Cooke will remain.

Southeastern Economic Development Commission: Commissioner Sykes will remain.

MOTSU: Commissioner Sykes with Chairman Forte as the alternate will remain.

XII. OTHER BUSINESS/INFORMAL DISCUSSION

No further business before the Board.

XIII. CLOSED SESSION

The Board entered Close Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1)(3) to approve Closed Session Minutes from the November 17, 2025, meeting and to consult with its attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege.

Mr. Batton noted the above statutory requirements.

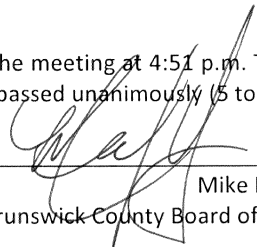
Vice – Chairman Cooke made the motion to enter Closed Session at 4:29 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Thompson and passed unanimously (5 to 0).

Chairman Forte called the Regular Session to order at 4:50 p.m.

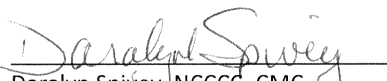
Mr. Batton advises there is nothing to report from Closed Session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Williams moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:51 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Thompson and passed unanimously (5 to 0).


Mike Forte, Chairman
Brunswick County Board of Commissioners

Attest:


Daralyn Spivey, NCCCC, CMC
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners



Chairman Forte called for a ten-minute break at 10:07 a.m.to reconvene at 10:20 a.m.

5. Planning and Community Enforcement – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Kirstie Dixon presented the goals and objectives for Planning and Community Enforcement for FY27.

6. Code Administration – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Gracie Thomas and Andrew Thompson presented the goals and objectives for Code Administration for FY27.

7. Parks and Recreation – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Aaron Perkins presented the goals and objectives for Parks and Recreation for FY27.

8. Library – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Patricia Dew presented the goals and objectives for the Library for FY27.

9. Tax Administration – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Melissa Radke presented the goals and objectives for Tax Administration for FY27.

10. Human Resources - FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Melanie Turrise presented the goals and objectives for Human Resources for FY27.

11. County Attorney - FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Bryan Batton presented the goals and objectives for the County Attorney's Office for FY27.

Chairman Forte called for a recess for lunch at 12:30 p.m.to reconvene at 1:00 p.m.

12. Communications – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Meagan Kasesak presented the goals and objectives for Communications for FY27.

13. Veterans Services – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Anita Hartsell presented the goals and objectives for Veteran Services for FY27.

14. Brunswick Senior Resources (BSRI)– FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Jim Fish presented the goals and objectives for BSRI for FY27.

Chairman Forte called for a ten-minute break at 2:43 p.m.to reconvene at 2:53 p.m.

15. Emergency Medical Services - FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Lyle Johnston presented the goals and objectives for Emergency Medical Services for FY27.

16. Public Housing - FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Catherine Lytch presented the goals and objectives for Public Housing for FY27.

17. Health Services - FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

David Howard presented the goals and objectives for Heath Services for FY27.

18. Social Services - FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Robby Hall presented the goals and objectives for Social Services for FY27.

19. Board of Elections - FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Sara LeVere presented the goals and objectives for the Board of Elections for FY27.

20. Information Technology – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Cindy Hewett presented the goals and objectives for Information Technology for FY27.

Chairman Forte called for a recess at 4:17 p.m. to reconvene at 9:00 a.m. January 21, 2026.

January 21, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Chairman Forte called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. to continue the presentation from the recessed meeting of January 20, 2026. All those listed as present above remain present today.

21. Emergency Management - FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

David McIntire presented the goals and objectives for Emergency Management for FY27.

22. Sheriff's Office – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

Sheriff Brian Chism presented the goals and objectives for the Sheriff's Office for FY27.

Chairman Forte called for a recess at 10:30 a.m. to reconvene at 10:50 a.m.

23. Public Utilities – FY26/27 Goals and Objectives

John Nichols presented the goals and objectives for Public Utilities for FY27.

V. ADMINISTRATION - CLOSING REMARKS**Commissioner Thompson:**

Taxes - No increase of taxes

Unfunded Mandates - State and Federal processes of the funding allotments syncing with the County funding and timing.

Pay Study- compensation is key for a solid staff base.

Commercial Growth/ Economic Development: Update regarding the status of those industries that have been looking to establish a site locally.

Dredging and the Ports: Environmental issues associated with this project and how it will affect our industry buildout.

Commissioner Williams:

Taxes: No Increase of taxes

Unfunded Mandates: Provide a listing of those services that are mandated and those that are unmandated for clarification.

Commercial Growth/Economic Development: Change from industry to more commercial growth.

Chairman Forte:

Taxes: Holding the taxes may not be feasible with the pay study, mandated services and other items from the state and federal funding changes and the trickle effect.

Commercial Growth/Economic Development – Multi-billion-dollar industries are not moving forward as planned to the area. More than minimum wage jobs are what is needed.

Commissioner Sykes:

Tax: No increase of taxes this fiscal year with the items to look at being:

School Bond forthcoming,

Non-profit areas could reduce some funding.

Personnel change in Engineering could save funding

Fire Departments are looking for funding

Library necessary additional items not mandatory for the County to fund

Mandated versus Unmandated Programs

Sheriff's Office Programs

Pay Study County-wide and the necessity
Water and Sewer increases will need to happen

Commissioner Cooke:

Public Safety: Maintaining public safety is critical.

County Staffing: Qualified individuals must be maintained.

Fire Department Funding: Must be collaborative with all involved.

App: County – Wide app for smartphones.

Dredge: Working on a public/private partnership.

Commercial Growth/Economic Development: Businesses are not coming even with the approved incentives.

Bryan Batton:

Commercial Growth/Economic Development: The County is working with NC DOT and will be placing a road and a water tower at the industrial site to make it more attractive to prospective investors.

Steve Stone:

Tax Rate: Staff will make every effort to bring forward a budget with a flat tax rate understanding that it is the Boards decision, however it is going to be extremely difficult with the following concerns:

Mandated Programs: Additional costs that will now fall to the county to fund that are mandated but no longer funded from the state or federal level.

Inflation: There are known inflationary increases.

Commercial Growth/Economic Development: The current federal government has slowed some of the industrial development of those interested in moving to the area.

Residential Growth: Most of the growth in Brunswick County is residential and residential growth is not enough to pay for necessary services.

School Bond: While it will not affect the 2027 fiscal year, there is some expectation that the county will absorb the cost of that bond.

The Port and Dredging: A majority of the dredging impacts would be to Brunswick County but would be necessary for the Ports to increase their business.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Sykes moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and passed unanimously (5 to 0).

Mike Forte, Chairman
Brunswick County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Daralyn Spivey, NCCCC/CMC
Clerk to the Board