BRUNSWICK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OFFICIAL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
March 16, 2026
6:00 P.M.

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on the above date at 6:00 p.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 Currie Elkins, IT Lt. Hester, Sheriff's Office

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

IV. CALL TO ORDER

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

V. INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Williams gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

VI. ADJUSTMENTS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Forte asked for adjustments to the agenda.

Commissioner Thompson requested one (1) item be added to Board Appointments as VIII.2 Planning Boad Member Update.

Commissioner Sykes requested a Closed Session regarding property acquisition.

Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Thompson and passed unanimously (5 to 0).

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Samuel Irbe (Identified as "Keyboard Warrior" on the sign-up sheet) thanked Chairman Forte for interceding on his behalf with an appointed Planning Board Member

Shirley Sullivan spoke of her concerns regarding roads, overdevelopment, school bonds, support of developers, increase of accidents, utilities at capacity, UDO updates, clearcutting, open burning, tree replacement, stormwater, and evacuation routes.

Hugh Fosberry representing the Jully 4th Festival Board of Directors reminded those present that donations and sponsorships are welcomed as that is what funds the entire festival.

VIII. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sykes and passed unanimously (5 to 0).

1. **Clerk to the Board – JCPC Roster Approval**
   The Board approved the roster for the JCPC Dated February 19, 2026.

2. **Clerk to the Board – Meeting Minutes – March 2, 2026, Regular Meeting.**
   The Board approved the Meeting Minutes for the March 2, 2026, Regular Meeting.

3. **County Attorney – Middle Creek Village, Ph3- Sec A Deed of Dedication**
   The Board approved the Deed of Dedication for water and sewer infrastructure for Middle Creek Village, Phase 3, Section A.

4. **Emergency Management – Southeastern North Carolina Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan**
   The Board adopted the 2026 Southeastern North Carolina Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (draft).

5. **EMS – Purchase of Lucas Chest Compression System**
   The Board approved the contract to purchase eight (8) Lucas Chest Compression Systems.

6. **Finance - Fiscal Items**
   The Board approved Budget Amendments, Capital Project Ordinances and Fiscal Items of a routine nature on the consent agenda to include the following:

   -Equipment Storage Building Hydrant Budget Amendment
   Transferred $17,390 from the County Capital Reserve designated for the Equipment Storage Building to the capital outlay buildings line in Operation Service for 600 feet of 6-inch water line along with a fire hydrant in order to obtain the building permit for the equipment storage building. Inspections require that there be a hydrant within 300 feet of any new structure, so this installation was necessary for permit approval.

   -Airport Grant 36.237.45.22.1 Grant Agreement, Budget Amendment, and Grant Ordinance
   Approved and authorized the Chairman to sign the grant agreement for the federal airport grant 36237.45.22.1 in the amount of $30,000, with local match of $3,334 and the associated budget amendment and grant ordinance.

   -Breast Feeding Peer Counselor State Award Revision Budget Amendment
   Health Services received the State Agreements for Restricted funds for the WIC Breast Feeding Peer Counselor program after the budget was presented for FY 26-27. The combined allocation for FY 26-27 (between the original agreement and the rev 1) is for $48,191.00 rather than the budgeted $50,000.00. The reduction can be supported through Contracted Services.

-WIC Client Services Additional Revenues Budget Amendment
Health Services has received additional State Restricted funds for the WIC Client Service program (Rev 1) in the amount of $20,391.00. Health Services has received additional State Restricted funds for the WIC Client Service program (Rev 2) in the amount of $18,196.00. These additional funds will be utilized for lab supplies, supplies and materials, equipment less than $500.00, and contract services to support increased client caseload needs.

-Utility Billing Insurance Proceeds Budget Amendment
Appropriated $1,000 of insurance refund revenue for expenses associated with damaged vehicle repair.

-Financial Reports for February 2026 (unaudited)
Summary Information for General and Enterprise Funds, ARPA. Opioid project statuses, key revenue indicators, and Cash and Investment details are included. All year-to-date fiscal reports are provided at: https://brunswickcountync.gov/finance/reports

7. **Health Services – Pre-Order for Influenza and Covid Vaccine Supplies for Fiscal Year 2026-2027**
The Board approved the pre-order of flu and Covid-19 vaccine supplies for fiscal year 2026-2027.

8. **Information Technology –Approval eRate Funding Continued Broadband Services for the Brunswick County Library (all branches)**
The Board approved the (eRate Category 1 funding) grant application that, if awarded, will provide funding to cover a significant portion of the cost to continue providing internet connectivity (bandwidth) at each branch of the Brunswick County Library. If the grant request is awarded, eRate funding will cover 85% of the cost ($15,297.45) and County funding will be needed to cover the remaining 15% of the cost ($2,699.55).

9. **Approve the eRate funding for Wireless Aps for (3) Branches of the Brunswick County Library**
The Board approved the (eRate- Category 2) grant application, that, if awarded, will provide funding to cover a significant portion of the cost to procure and install wireless access points and related infrastructure in (3) branches (Shallotte, Leland and Oak Island) of the Brunswick County Library.

10. **Information Technology – Approval eRate Structured Cabling Funding (2) Branches (Leland and Southwest) of the Brunswick County Library**
The Board approved the (eRate- Category 2) grant application, that, if awarded, will provide funding to cover a significant portion of the cost to procure and install structured cabling and infrastructure for (2) branches of the Brunswick County Library. If the grant request is awarded, eRate funding will cover 85% of the cost ($63,080.23) and County funding will be needed to cover the remaining 15% of the cost ($11,131.81).

11. **Library – Acceptance of LSTA Scholarship Grant**
The Board approved the application and acceptance of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Scholarship grant awarded to Brunswick County (subrecipient) from the State Library of North Carolina (recipient) in the amount of $2,000, to fund attendance at PLA for Library staff member Forest Schweitzer.

12. **Tax - March 2026 Tax Releases**
The Board approved the March 2026 releases.

13. Utilities – Budget Amendment – Southport Lift Station Replacement Project (SRP-W-ARP-0105)

The Board approved a Budget Amendment for the Southport Lift Station Replacement Project (SRP-W-ARP-0105) in the amount of $127,999 to cover easement acquisition and additional advertising costs.

14. Utilities – Contract and Sole Source Approval for CES Water, Inc

The Board approved the Sole Source Resolution and the contract with CES Water, Inc. in the amount of $200,000.00 for the purchase of EOne pumps and components. The Resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF E/ONE GRINDER PUMPS AND COMPONENTS UNDER SOLE SOURCE EXCEPTION TO FORMAL BIDDING REQUIREMENTS

WHEREAS, N.C.G.S 143-129(e)(6), Procedure for Letting of Public Contracts, allows for the waiver of formal bidding requirements for purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment when performance or price competition for a product are not available, or a needed product is available from only one source of supply, or standardization or compatibility is the overriding consideration; and

WHEREAS, Brunswick County must utilize certain Environment One Corporation ("E/One") grinder pumps and components for standardization and compatibility with its existing wastewater collection system; and

WHEREAS, Environment One Corporation is the manufacturer of the proprietary E/One grinder pumps and components and has only one authorized representative for the pumps and components in the state of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners approved a blanket sole source vendor list on August 18, 2025, which listed Covalen, Inc. as the approved sole source provider for the pumps and components in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Environment One Corporation has recently restructured its authorized representative territories and has notified Brunswick County that it divided North Carolina and South Carolina into separate territories; and

WHEREAS, Environment One Corporation has now designated CES Water, Inc. instead of Covalen, Inc. to be its only authorized representative for E/One grinder pumps and components within North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the governing board must approve the purchase under this bidding exemption prior to awarding the contract.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners approves the purchases described herein utilizing the exception to formal bidding requirements contained in N.C.G.S. 143-129(e)(6) and finds that the conditions described in that statute have been met.

Adopted this the 16th day of March, 2026.

Mike Forte, Chairman
Brunswick County Board of Commissioners

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

15. **Utilities – Headwaters – Professional Servies Agreement – Utilities Operation Cetner (U.O.C)**
The Board authorized the Chairperson and Clerk to the Board to execute the Professional Services Agreement with Headwaters of the Cape Fear, PLLC (Headwaters), in the amount of $37,360.00 for engineering-related services for the Utilities Operations Center (U.O.C) Laydown Yard project.

16. **Utilities – Mechanical Equipment Company Contract for Aurora Pumps and Assemblies**
The Board approved a contract with Mechanical Equipment Company in the amount of $98,233.94 for the purchase of Aurora pumps and assemblies.

17. **Utilities – NC DOT Betterment Agreement – Highway 211 Road Widening**
The Board approved the Betterment Agreement between NCDOT and Brunswick County in the amount of $606,663.53.

18. **Utilities – Vision Infrastructure Contact for Gravity Sewer Service**
The Board awarded a contract to Vision Infrastructure Development Inc. for the installation of a gravity sewer service on 261 Cougar Road in Boiling Spring Lakes in the amount of $15,500.00.

IX. PRESENTATION

a. **Administration – Resolution for General Obligation School Bond Referendum**

Mr. Stone advised the Board of the required resolution necessary to issue $349.6 million in School General Obligation Bonds proposed for constructing, improving, and renovating school facilities, directing the publication of notice of intention to apply to the Local Government Commission (LGC) for approval of bonds, authorizing the Finance Director to apply and submit to the Local Government Commission (LGC) for approval of the proposed General Obligation Bond Financing and making certain statements of fact concerning proposed bond issue. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve both of the resolution. Commissioner Sykes seconded the motion and passed unanimously (5-0). The first resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF BRUNSWICK, NORTH CAROLINA DIRECTING THE PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR APPROVAL OF BONDS.

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners (the "*Board*") of the County of Brunswick, North Carolina (the "*County*") is considering the issuance of general obligation bonds of the County which shall be for the following purpose and in the following maximum amount:

> $349,6000,000 of bonds to provide funds to pay the capital costs of constructing, improving, and renovating school facilities, including, but not limited to, the construction and renovation of classroom facilities, the acquisition and installation of furnishings and equipment, the acquisition of land, rights-of-way and easements in land required therefor, and related public infrastructure development.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board that the Clerk to the Board is hereby directed to cause a copy of the "NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY TO THE LOCAL

GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR APPROVAL OF BONDS" to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall become effective on the date of its adoption.

READ, APPROVED AND ADOPTED on March 16, 2026.

Mike Forte, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

Attest:
Daralyn Spivey
Clerk to the Board

The second resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF BRUNSWICK, NORTH CAROLINA MAKING CERTAIN STATEMENTS OF FACT CONCERNING PROPOSED BOND ISSUE AND AUTHORIING THE APPLICATION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners (the "*Board*") of the County of Brunswick, North Carolina (the "*County*") is considering the issuance of general obligation bonds of the County which shall be for the following purpose and in the following maximum amount:

> $349,6000,000 of bonds to provide funds to pay the capital costs of constructing, improving, and renovating school facilities, including, but not limited to, the construction and renovation of classroom facilities, the acquisition and installation of furnishings and equipment, the acquisition of land, rights-of-way and easements in land required therefor, and related public infrastructure development.

WHEREAS, certain findings of fact by the Board must be presented to enable the Local Government Commission of North Carolina (the "*Commission*") to make certain determinations as set forth in Section 159-52 of the North Carolina General Statutes, as amended.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board, meeting in open session on March 16, 2026, has made the following factual findings in regard to this matter:

A. **Facts Regarding Necessity of Proposed Financing.** The proposed bonds are necessary or expedient to pay the capital costs of constructing, improving, and renovating school facilities as set forth above.

B. **Facts Supporting the Amount of Bonds Proposed.** The sums estimated for these bonds are adequate and not excessive for the proposed purpose. Estimates for the proposed projects have been carefully analyzed and determined by persons knowledgeable about the projects.

C. **Past Debt Management Procedures and Policies.** The County's debt management procedures and policies are good and have been carried out in compliance with law. The County employs a Finance Director to oversee compliance with applicable laws relating to debt management. The Board requires annual audits of County finances. In connection with these audits, compliance with laws is reviewed. The County is not in default in any of its debt service obligations. The County Attorney reviews all debt-related documents for compliance with laws.

D. **Past Budgetary and Fiscal Management Policies.** The County's budgetary and fiscal management policies have been carried out in compliance with laws. Annual budgets are closely reviewed by the Board before final approval of budget ordinances. Budget amendments changing a function total or between functions are presented to the Board at regular Board meetings. The Finance Director presents financial information to the Board which shows budget to actual comparisons annually and otherwise as the County Manager deems necessary or as a member of the Board may request.

E. **Increase in Taxes.** The increase in taxes, if any, necessary to service the proposed debt will not be excessive. The schedule for issuance anticipates issuing all of the bonds in one or more series during the seven years following the approval of the bond order.

F. **Marketing of Bonds.** The proposed bonds can be marketed at reasonable rates of interest.

G. **Estimated Interest.** The assumptions to be used by the County's Finance Director in preparing the statement of disclosure to be filed with the Clerk to the Board pursuant to Section 159-55.1(a) of the General Statutes of North Carolina are reasonable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby authorizes and directs the Finance Director of the County to file with the Commission an application for its approval of General Obligation School Bonds hereinbefore described, on a form prescribed by said Commission, and (1) to request in such application that said Commission approve the County's use of Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP, as bond counsel for the County and (2) to state in such application such facts and to attach thereto such exhibits in regard to such General Obligation School Bonds and the County's financial condition, as may be required by said Commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall become effective on the date of its adoption.

READ, APPROVED AND ADOPTED on March 16, 2026.

Mike Forte, Chairman of the Board

Attest:
Daralyn Spivey, NCCCC, CMC
Clerk to the Board

b. Utilities – Grant Agreement – Highway 87 Water Main Transmission

Mr. Lockamy and Mr. Nichols requested the approval of the Board of an agreement between the Department of the Army and Brunswick County, providing $13,100,000 in funding for the Highway 87 Water Main Transmission Project, approval of the use of $6,900,000 in County funds, and to authorize the County Manager to execute the Agreement and all associated project documents. Commissioner Sykes made the motion to approve the agreement. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion and passed unanimously (5-0).

X. **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

a. **Administration – Interbasin Transfer Request – Cape Fear Council of Governments Collective Response**
Mr. Brooks requested at a minimum the consensus of the Board to allow Mr. Stone, the County Manager, to sign a letter initiated by the Cape Fear Council of Governments opposing Fuquay-Varina's IBT transfer request. Commissioner Thompson made the motion allowing Mr. Stone to sign the letter when it's ready. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion and passed unanimously (5-0).

2. **Administration – Proposal for Special Inspections and Construction Materials Testing Services Brunswick County Health and Human Services /Emergency Operation Center Building**
Commissioner Thompson made the motion to approve the S&ME, Inc. proposal for Special Instructions and Construction Materials Testing and Services for the new Health and Human Services / Emergency Operation Center Building. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion and passed unanimously (5-0).

3. **EMS – LifePak Purchase**
Vice – Chairman Cooke made the motion to approve the contract for the purchase of forty (40) Lifepak cardiac monitors. Commissioner Thompson seconded the motion and passed unanimously (5-0).

4. **Human Resources – Renewal of Medical Plan**
Melanie Turrise, Human Resources Director, requests the Board approve the renewal of the medical plan through the North Carolina Health Insurance Pool (NCHIP) and authorize the County Manager to execute the required renewal documentation. Request approval for Human Resources to schedule Benefits Open Enrollment for plan year 2026-27 (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027). And to request direction of the removal of GLP-1 drug coverage specifically for weight loss or management. Commissioner Sykes made the motion to approve the medical plan through the NCHIP with the removal weight loss GLP-1 medication, authorized the County Manager to sign the associated documents and schedule open enrollment, and deny funding for (weight loss) GLP-1 subsidy. Commissioner Thompson seconded the motion and passed (4 to 1). The poll is as follows:

Commissioner Thompson: Aye
Commissioner Forte: Aye
Commissioner Cooke: Nay
Commissioner Sykes: Aye
Commissioner Williams: Aye

XI. **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

i. **Clerk to the Board – Nursing Home and Adult Care Home Community**
Commissioner Thompson made the motion to approve Mr. Dana Page to the Nursing Home and Adult Care Home Community Board. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion and passed unanimously (5-0).

b. Commissioner Thompson advised the remainder of the Board that he had submitted a letter to Mr. Clif Cheek, requesting his resignation as the appointee for District 1 Planning Board seat. This results from the contributions received by Mr. Cheek from developers and this created a perception of a conflict of interest for the County. Commissioner Sykes also questioned the residence of Mr. Jason Gaver (District 4 appointee to the Planning Board) which is unknown at this time and if his vote should have legally counted regarding decisions of the Planning

Board on March 9. Mr. Batton advised that the one vote would not have changed the outcome of the project. No further action was taken

XII. <u>OTHER BUSINESS/INFORMAL DISCUSSION</u>

Commissioner Williams would like to see a more formal training process for those currently serving on the different boards within the County. Once the training program is drafted, bring it back to this Board for approval to include a code of conduct requiring annual review and signature.

XIII. <u>CLOSED SESSION</u>

The Board entered Close Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with its attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege.

Mr. Batton noted the above statutory requirements.

Commissioner Thompson made the motion to enter Closed Session at 7:40 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sykes and passed unanimously (5 to 0).

Chairman Forte called the Regular Session to order at 7:55 p.m.

Mr. Batton advises he has nothing to report from Closed Session.

XIV. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

Commissioner Sykes made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 p.m. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion and passed unanimously (5-0).

Mike Forte, Chairman
Brunswick County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

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