

Greg Edds, Chairman
Jim Greene, Vice-Chairman
Mike Caskey
Judy Klusman
Craig Pierce



Aaron Church, County Manager
Sarah Pack, Clerk to the Board
John W. Dees, II, County Attorney

Rowan County Board of Commissioners

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

January 20, 2026 – 6:00 PM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROWAN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

PRESENT:

Greg Edds, Chairman
Jim Greene, Vice-Chairman
Craig Pierce, Commissioner
Judy Klusman, Commissioner
Mike Caskey, Commissioner

County Manager Aaron Church, County Attorney Jay Dees, Clerk to the Board Sarah Pack and Finance Director Anna Bumgarner were also present.

Call to Order

Chairman Edds called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Chaplain Michael Taylor provided a solemnizing prayer. Chairman Edds lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consider Additions to the Agenda

Chairman Edds said that a Scope of Work for Fountainworks would be added as Consent Item V.

Consider Deletions From the Agenda

Chairman Edds said the School Bond Discussion would be removed from the agenda.

Consider Approval of the Agenda

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Greene, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the agenda as amended.

Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Klusman, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as amended, as follows:

A. *Consider Approval of the Minutes - 1/5/26 Regular Meeting*

B. *Budget Amendments, as follows:*

6100- Library	Appropriate additional funds from NC State for books	\$530
5100- Health Department	Appropriate awarded funding from Foundation for the Carolinas for SNAP double bucks	\$4,750

4112- General Government	Transfer funds to cover attorney fees	\$143,050
Fund 317- West End Plaza/ Rowan Community Center	Transfer funds to cover hazardous material survey for phase 5	\$8,000
4112- General Government	Appropriate funds to cover attorney fees	\$75,000

- C. *RFQ Authorization — Services for Property Selection & Design of Accessible Recreation Facility for Adults with Disabilities*
- D. *Consolidation of Cash Handling Procedures for Parks and Recreation*
- E. *Amendment #2 - Interlocal Agreement regarding Inmate Housing - Richmond County*
- F. *Approve-Legal Services—Womble Bond Dickinson*
- G. *Road Name Change – Three Forks Drive – Set Public Hearing*
- H. *Work Order with First Tryon for 2026 GO Bond*
- I. *Agreement with McGuire Woods for 2026 GO Bond*
- J. *State Highway Patrol Lease Proposal Form PO-28*
- K. *Resolution allowing three retiring officers to purchase service sidearms*
- L. *Clerical Correction to 12/1/25 Minutes*
- M. *NC Youth Sports Grant*
- N. *Tax & VTS Refunds*
- O. *Fleet Management - Holman*
- P. *Approval for Parks and Recreation to Apply for the Margaret C. Woodson Foundation Grant*
- Q. *GRANTS: Approval to Apply for the K-12 STEM Award*
- R. *Request for Public Hearing - EDC 'Project Paddock'*
- S. *IT Department Position Reclassifications*
- T. *GRANTS: Woodson Foundation Grant Application - DSS/ROCO*
- U. *Public Rating Agreement for 2026 GO Bonds*
- V. *Approve Scope of Work for Fountainworks **Agenda Addition***

Public Comment Period

Chairman Edds opened the floor for Public Comment and closed it after no one wished to speak.

Public Hearing – ZTA 02-25: NC Salisbury, LLC

Shane Stewart, Assistant Planning and Development Director, presented a text amendment request from NC Salisbury LLC (Rowan RV/General RV) regarding rooftop solar installations allowed in the airport zone overlay. Currently, rooftop solar for nonresidential uses is prohibited in the conical and horizontal surfaces of the airport zone overlay.

Mr. Stewart explained that in February 2024, the Board had previously approved changes to allow rooftop solar for residential properties under 6,000 square feet with anti-reflective coating. This new text amendment would allow nonresidential rooftop solar in the airport zone overlay with several conditions:

1. All systems must have anti-reflective coating with less than 2% reflectivity
2. For systems exceeding 6,000 square feet, additional requirements include:
 - A glare analysis certified by a North Carolina registered professional engineer
 - Certification of proper installation prior to operation

- Periodic testing every 5 years to ensure continued compliance with reflectivity standards
- Compliance testing if complaints are received
- Requirements to repair or replace panels that exceed 2% reflectivity

Mr. Stewart confirmed that the Airport Director had no opposition to the text amendment, and the Planning Board had unanimously recommended approval.

Commissioners expressed concerns about enforcement and the potential for defunct systems. Mr. Stewart clarified that while the ordinance focuses on safety issues like glare rather than operation, the testing requirements provide a mechanism for ongoing monitoring.

Alex Khokhlov from PPM Solar, a licensed North Carolina electrical contractor with 17 years of experience, addressed the Board. He explained that this was the most comprehensive policy for solar installations he had seen, including multiple layers of protection beyond standard glare analysis. He noted that modern solar panels are designed to absorb rather than reflect light, with manufacturers providing warranties that cover anti-reflective coating defects. He explained that systems would be installed solely for offsetting existing consumption at commercial properties, not for selling electricity back to the grid.

In response to Commissioner questions about solar panel recycling, Mr. Khokhlov stated there are about 12 certified recycling facilities in the United States, including several in the Southeast, and that his company does not put solar panels in landfills.

At 6:28 p.m. Chairman Edds opened the Public Hearing and closed it after no one wished to speak.

On motion of Edds, seconded by Pierce, the Board voted 5-0 that ZTA 02-25 is reasonable, appropriate, necessary to meet the development needs of Rowan County not previously envisioned. The text surrounding ground mounted and roof mounted solar panels within the conical surface of the Mid Carolina Regional Airport based on the new text surrounding glare maintenance, compliance, testing, and decommissioning.

On motion of Klusman, seconded by Pierce, the Board voted 5-0 to approve ZTA 02-25.

Public Hearing – Hazardous Materials Ordinance Update

TJ Brown, Emergency Services Interim Chief, presented updates to the Hazardous Materials Ordinance, which was initially adopted in 2025 to establish authority and procedures to recover hazardous materials response and cleanup costs. After review with county finance and the county attorney's office, it was determined that some language needed to be removed for consistency. The changes involved removing duplicative or inconsistent verbiage from four sections of the ordinance.

At 6:35 p.m. Chairman Edds opened the Public Hearing and closed it after no one wished to speak.

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Greene, the Board voted 5-0 to approve the updates to the Hazardous Materials Ordinance as presented.

Public Hearing – Fire Code Ordinance Text Amendments

TJ Brown, Emergency Services Interim Chief, presented a simple change to the Fire Code Ordinance to remove the specific reference to "2006" and replace it with "current" so that the county can use the current edition of the fire code adopted by the State of North Carolina. The change also creates consistency between the fire code and current building codes. Brown explained that the fire code is updated approximately every four years by the state, and this amendment would allow the county to automatically adopt the current version.

At 6:37 p.m. Chairman Edds opened the Public Hearing and closed it after no one wished to speak.

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Greene, the Board voted 5-0 to approve Fire Code Ordinance text amendments.

Financial Report

Anna Bumgarner, Finance Director, presented the financial report through December 2025:

- Cumulative expenditures through December were up \$7,000,000 (7.32%) compared to the same time last year
- Cumulative revenues through December were up \$4,900,000 (4.3%)
- Current year property tax through November was up \$5,600,000 (7.18%)

Ms. Bumgarner explained that increases in property tax revenue came from:

1. Natural growth (typically 2-3% year over year)
2. Personal property tax increases from businesses (citing an example of one company whose personal property value increased from under \$1 million to almost \$3 million)

She noted that as of December 21, 2025, the county had collected 77.38% of the tax levy, compared to 77.47% at the same time in the previous year. She also mentioned that timing differences in when companies pay their taxes can shift the month-to-month comparative figures. For sales tax, the county was up \$641,000 (6%) cumulatively through September. For the month of September alone, the county was up \$630,000 (18.7%) compared to September of the previous year, which had been unusually low.

Closed Session

On motion of Edds, seconded by Pierce, the Board voted 5-0 to enter into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1) to consider approval of the minutes of the Closed Session held on January 5, 2026, as described by NCGS 143- 318.10(e), and pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3), to consult with an attorney.

Resume Open Session

At 7:04 p.m. Open Session resumed.

On motion of Edds, seconded by Pierce, the Board voted 5-0 to approve an engagement letter with Johnston Allison Hord Law Firm regarding the John Rink Trust and to approve a budget amendment to appropriate available fund balance for attorney fees up to no more than \$75,000.

Adjournment

At 7:05 p.m., on motion of Pierce, seconded by Greene, the Board voted 5-0 to adjourn.

Sarah Pack, CMC, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board