

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

March 16, 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
Mike Caskey, Commissioner

ABSENT:

Craig Pierce, Commissioner
Judy Klusman, Commissioner

County Manager Aaron Church, County Attorney Jay Dees, Clerk to the Board Sarah Pack and Chief Finance Officer 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 Duke Energy Easement for the Hangar Expansion - Corporate Hangar would be added to the agenda as Consent Item S.

Consider Deletions From the Agenda

There were no deletions from the agenda.

Consider Approval of the Agenda

On motion of Greene, seconded by Caskey, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the agenda as amended.

Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda

On motion of Greene, seconded by Caskey, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as amended, as follows:

- A. *Consider Approval of the Minutes - 03/02/26 Regular Meeting*
- B. *Budget Amendments, as follows:*

Fund 103- Capital Projects	Transfer funds to cover Telecom capital project for towers	\$10,728,278
6400- Animal Services	Appropriate funds to cover vouchers for	

	the remainder of FY26	\$7,727
4125-Finance	Transfer funds to correct clerical error on WC calculation on BA 08-875	\$41,400
4500- Transit	Reconcile City of Concord Grants for FY26	\$32,615
4500- Transit	Appropriate funds to roll over City of Concord grant and then move to T0001 for reclassification	\$54,740
4950- Cooperative Ext	To reconginze NRA Grant award to cooperative extention	\$3,387

- C. *Request to Use County Property for Cruise-In/Car Show - 2026*
- D. *NRA Grant Acceptance for Rowan County 4-H*
- E. *Rowan-Cabarrus Community College North Campus Fire Training Center Project*
- F. *Reclassification of Community Paramedic Position*
- G. *Policy Exemption - DKM Media LLC - FY26-30 -Revised*
- H. *Award Master Agreement for Landscape Architectural Services for Site Selection & Design — Therapeutic Recreation Facilities - LandDesign*
- I. *Schedule Legislative hearing for Z 01-26/SNIA 01-26 for the April 6th meeting*
- J. *Policy Exemption - DSW - HD. (C26424)*
- K. *Revised Library Hours of Operation*
- L. *Schedule Legislative Hearing for Z 02-26: Jeremy Good, for April 6, 2026*
- M. *Purchase/Install — New 800 MHZ Mobile Radios — Rowan Transit System*
- N. *Approve Repair/Rebuild Cat 826K 2019 Compactor - Landfill - Carolina CAT*
- O. *VTS & TAX REFUNDS FOR APPROVAL*
- P. *Schedule Public Hearing-Road Naming-Wizard Way*
- Q. *Sunday Morning Sporting Events Policy*
- R. *Purchase - RCC – New Health Department Project – Furniture*
- S. *Duke Energy Easement for Hangar Expansion - Corporate Hangar (**Agenda Addition**)*

Public Comment Period

Edds/caskey to extend the public comment period

Chairman Edds opened the floor for Public Comment and closed it after everyone wishing to speak had done so.

Connie Byrne said there is confusion surrounding a potential data center. She requested the Board share pertinent information with citizens regarding a data center.

Cheryl Malaguti said it is getting expensive to live in Rowan County. She asked what the County can do to help residents. She requested a meeting with Commissioners.

Gabriel Malaguti said budget cuts related to HB1 are affecting residents. He gave statistics regarding struggles that residents are facing.

Mark Ortiz said it may be difficult as a commissioner to face citizens with all of the challenges the county is facing, including a data center on Long Ferry Road. He is worried about power consumption related to the data center.

Adam Parnell is concerned about the noise that could potentially be produced by the data center, particularly at a nearby church. He questioned if Duke Energy will raise rates due to the data center's energy usage.

Samantha Ring said data centers emit a low to high frequency noise 24 hours per day that can cause hearing loss, mental health problems, and cardiovascular disease. Particulate matter can also be released, affecting residents. Water systems may also be affected. She is concerned about health and environmental impacts. Duke Energy is also declaring record profits while raising prices to unsustainable levels. She noted that Board decisions regarding the data center will leave a legacy.

Anthony Collins is a regenerative farmer who lives on Long Ferry Road. He suggested that data centers will have a major impact on the future, especially for farmers. If pollution occurs or energy costs are impacted, it could influence him to seek a home elsewhere. He advocated for trying to live the American dream, and data centers will hinder that.

Sal Cerbone Jr. said he recently purchased property next to where the data center is proposed and is disgusted by the land development happening adjacent to his property. He said that Duke Energy has poisoned the local land and water is contaminated. He has no faith in the government. He said residents are having to deal with the issues caused by this data center.

Chairman Greg Edds addressed the crowd, noting it was the first time in his tenure he had stepped out to respond during public comment, emphasizing that the board typically does not engage during that period. He reiterated expectations for respect and explained he wanted to directly address concerns. He provided an update on the Long Ferry Road water line, including past issues with water chemistry interacting with older plumbing, the county-funded fixes, and plans to transfer the system to Salisbury-Rowan Utilities to reduce residents' costs.

Chairman Edds clarified that there is currently no data center deal, no negotiations, and no offers, though data centers were added as a permitted use for the site. He distinguished a separate manufacturing company from any data center discussion and emphasized that many circulating claims—such as county payments to developers or secret deals—are inaccurate. He explained the county had *proposed* (but never paid) \$4.2 million for road improvements tied to a prior development agreement that did not materialize.

He outlined the county's due diligence process, including studying water usage, infrastructure costs, environmental impacts, and noise. He stated that any project would require dedicated utility infrastructure paid for by the developer and noted the county's intent to require detailed studies and safeguards before any decision. He acknowledged community concerns about water, environmental risks, and transparency, and committed to providing public documentation and timelines online.

Chairman Edds also discussed broader economic development strategy, explaining the county's goal to shift its tax base toward a more balanced mix of residential and commercial/industrial revenue to reduce pressure on property taxes. He highlighted significant upcoming capital needs (schools, EMS, infrastructure, parks) and explained why large capital investments—such as a potential data center—are financially attractive due to high tax revenue with relatively low traffic impact.

He concluded by emphasizing that no final decisions have been made, that the county shares many of the community's concerns (especially water and environmental impacts), and that any future action would depend on thorough evaluation and what is deemed in the best interest of the county as a whole.

Donation to Animal Services

Chief Finance Officer Anna Bumgarner said Rowan County received a donation of \$456,435.94 for use by Animal Services.

Commissioner Caskey asked if the money had to be used any specific way.

Animal Services Director Maria Pannell shared several ideas for using the funds to improve pet retention with the goal of keeping animals out of the shelter.

On motion of Greene, seconded by Caskey, the Board voted 3-0 to accept the donation to Animal Services in the amount of \$456,435.94.

Presentation & Approval – Statement of Work (SOW): Project 25 Public Safety Radio Communications Systems Enhancements – Motorola

Emergency Services Chief TJ Brown discussed upgrading the public service radio system. The proposal seeks to upgrade the core infrastructure of the existing system, beyond the previously approved subscriber portable and mobile radios. Key improvements include modernizing the microwave transmission links between towers and introducing a looped network design for redundancy. This eliminates the current single point of failure at the tower, allowing transmissions to reroute via alternate paths if needed.

A major safety feature involves enabling automatic vehicle location geographic positioning system (GPS) tracking on radios. The system would transmit the user's position whenever the radio is activated, and even send location updates roughly every 1.5 minutes when idle. This is particularly valuable for law enforcement during foot pursuits or chases, enabling the 911 center to track officers' real-time locations, even through backyards or areas with poor verbal description, and quickly direct backup support.

Discussion arose about battery life concerns with GPS-enabled radios, based on past experiences where batteries drained quickly (e.g., lasting only a few hours or around 11 hours with thicker batteries). Chief Brown countered that current radios with GPS active have shown no significant battery issues in their deployment, often lasting a full 12–20+ hours depending on the battery type and usage. The department initially purchased two batteries per radio as a

precaution, and there are no plans to allow users to disable the location feature. Additional batteries could be considered if needed.

The total turnkey project cost is \$5,364,138.60. The board was asked to authorize the County Manager to execute the Statement of Work, approve a budget amendment, and approve the capital project ordinance. The budget amendment reallocates funds originally set aside for debt service (since the project is now being funded without new debt) and pulls one year's debt payment budgeted for an unfinished EMS station project. This created a roughly \$2.3 million gap covered by fund balance to fully fund the \$5.365 million project.

Chief Finance Officer Bumgarner explained the need for a budget amendment.

On motion of Edds, seconded by Caskey, the Board voted 3-0 to authorize the County Manager to execute the attached Statement of Work (SOW) with Motorola to begin the next phase of the Public Safety Radio Communications Enhancements project, not to exceed \$5,364,138.60.

On motion of Edds, seconded by Greene, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the associated budget amendment.

On motion of Edds, seconded by Caskey, the Board voted 3-0 to approve the associated Capital Project Ordinance.

Financial Report

Anna Bumgarner, Chief Finance Officer, presented the financial reports, stating that cumulative expenditures through February were up \$6.8 million (5.34%) over the prior year; revenues were up 2.1% overall (1.33%); property taxes through January rose \$5.9 million (5.52%); and sales tax through November increased \$451,000 (2.48%), though November was slightly down and December preliminary figures suggest a modest uptick. She noted sales tax trends remain variable and require more time to assess fully for the fiscal year.

Adjournment

At 8:20 p.m., on motion of Greene, seconded by Caskey, the Board voted 3-0 to adjourn.

Sarah Pack, CMC, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board