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
June 1, 2026 – 3:00 PM
J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM
J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROWAN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

PRESENT:
Greg Edds, Chairman
Mike Caskey, Commissioner
Judy Klusman, Commissioner
Craig Pierce, Commissioner

ABSENT:
Jim Greene, Vice-Chairman

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

Call to Order

Chairman Edds called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Chaplain Michael Taylor provided a solemnizing prayer. Chairman Edds lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consider Additions to the Agenda

Chairman Edds noted the addition of a Corrected Satisfaction for HOME Rehabilitation Deed of Trust as Consent Item Z.

Consider Deletions From the Agenda

There were no deletions from the agenda.

Consider Approval of the Agenda

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Klusman, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the agenda as amended.

Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda

On motion of Klusman, seconded by Pierce, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Consent Agenda as amended, as follows:

A. Budget Amendments, as follows:

4400- Sheriff	*Appropriate funds to reconcile ALCOA funds for FY26*	*$41,144*
6200- Parks & Rec	*Transfer funds to cover the cost of DNP site concept plan*	*$75,000*

6200- Parks & Rec	*Appropriate funds to recongize funds received from America 250 grant*	*$4,000*
6400- Animal Services	*Appropriate funds from insurance settlement from wreck of unit 2516*	*$30,180*
Fund 204- Farmland Preservation	*Appropriate funds from general fund to Farmland Preservation*	*$2,000,000*
Fund 204- Farmland Preservation	*Appropriate funds for estimate Present Usr Tax revenue for Farmland Preservation*	*$700,000*
4950- Cooperative Ext	*Appropriate funds to cover FY26 expenses for the remainder of the year*	*$16,500*
4160- Information Systems	*Transfer funds to cover SEGRA to acquire account lines that are no longer supported*	*$21,652*
3170- WEP Fund	*Appropriate funds from GF to WEP fund to cover appraisal fees for RCC*	*$5,500*
4125- Finance	*Appropriate funds to cover GASB contract 26477*	*$21,515*
4400- Sheriff	*Appropriate funds to cover credit card chargeback fees for detention center*	*$5,665*

B. *Proclamation Establishing June 15-21 as Men's Health Week in Rowan County*
C. *LandDesign Inc. - Work Authorization - Parks & Recreation - PNR Master Plan & DNP Site Concept Plan*
D. *Request for amendment to incentive agreement for Project Pixie*
E. *America 250 RSS 6th Grade Essay Contest Winners*
F. *Revised Policy 10.1 Annual Performance Evaluations*
G. *Farmland Preservation Budget Amendment*
H. *Statistically Valid Survey - RRC Associates - PNR Master Plan - Parks & Rec*
I. *Tax and VTS Refunds for Approval*
J. *RCC Rental Contract Revision*
K. *ADA Renovation Project - The Bogle Firm - Ellis Park Bathroom*
L. *Ambulance Franchise Agreements*
M. *Landfill Refund*
N. *Authorize Satisfaction for HOME Deed of Trust*
O. *Amendment #4 – Contract 24659 – CBH Medical – RCDC Inmate Health Care*
P. *Change Order #3 - CBH Medical – RCDC Inmate Health Care - Contract 24659*
Q. *Sole Source & Purchase — Bad Elf, LLC — GPS units for Environmental Health*
R. *Animal Services Vehicle Purchase*
S. *Fireworks Display Permit – Oasis Shrine Club*
T. *Change Order #1 - Zoladz Construction - Excavation & Hauling Dirt*
U. *Amendment for Capital Project Ordinance for Concourse Signage Project*
V. *Sole-Source - Information Inc FY27-31*
W. *Finance Reclassifications Request*
X. *Ratify Proclamation for Faith Academy Girls Basketball*
Y. *Crimestoppers Reward*
Z. *Corrected Satisfactioni for HOME Rehabilitation Deed of Trust (**Agenda Addition**)*

Special Recognitions

Chairman Edds recognized the winners of the America 250 Essay Contest and presented each with a certificate of recognition.

Chairman Edds invited Shelly Lindhausen of Quilts of Valor to the podium. Ms. Lindhausen recognized Commissioner Mike Caskey and presented him with a Quilt in honor of his service.

Public Comment Period

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

Public Hearing for FY 2027 Proposed Budget

Anna Bumgarner, Chief Finance Officer, reviewed several necessary edits and clarifications. She noted that the $5 million capital project previously identified for the Nature Center should instead be clarified as funding for Dan Nicholas Park as a whole. She also requested the addition of language allowing commissioners the option of receiving a monthly cell phone stipend of approximately $55 in lieu of a county-issued phone. Additionally, she explained that School Resource Officer positions should be corrected from deputies to corporals, with no anticipated budget impact. Ms. Bumgarner further outlined an increase of approximately $37,000 for EMS stretcher maintenance costs due to an audit revealing more units than originally billed, recommending that the increase be covered through contingency funds. Finally, she stated that language in the Farmland Preservation Fund should be revised to reflect that funding is a transfer from the general fund rather than standalone revenue, with no change to overall funding amounts.

Chairman Edds provided clarification regarding the cell phone stipend option and announced that Vice-Chairman Greene was absent due to travel. He indicated a preference to delay budget adoption until all members are present and additional information on newly proposed items can be reviewed.

Commissioners then presented several funding requests for consideration. Commissioner Pierce requested approximately $55,000 to replace an Animal Services transport van that has been out of service for nearly a year, emphasizing its necessity for safe and compliant animal transport. Commissioner Klusman requested a one-time allocation of $500,000 to support the United Way's HUB project, a shared nonprofit facility downtown, noting the project's total cost and funds already raised. Commissioner Caskey asked for two staffing adjustments within the Sheriff's Office, totaling $35,150, and also proposed increasing the annual fire department allocation from $10,000 to $12,500 per department to address rising costs.

Following discussion, the Board expressed consensus to delay action on the budget until a later meeting in mid-June to allow time for further review of the proposed changes and preparation of amendments. Staff were directed to compile the discussed items into a format for consideration prior to the next meeting, with the understanding that the budget must be adopted by June 30.

At 3:33 p.m. Chairman Edds opened the Public Hearing and closed it after everyone wishing to speak had done so.

Mark Nye asked about the total proposed budget and how to access its details. Staff responded that the proposed general fund budget totals $246,960,509 and is available for public review on the county's website.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Edds closed the Public Hearing at 3:36 p.m.

Public Hearing and Executive Summary: EDC Project Rack

Scott Shelton, Rowan EDC Vice President, presented a request for consideration of incentives related to "Project Rack," identified as a well-known American brand with both national and international presence. He explained that the company is evaluating Rowan County as a potential location for a new distribution center within the southeastern United States and is considering an existing vacant facility in the county. If selected, the project would involve an investment of approximately $41 million in building improvements and equipment, with operations targeted to begin in the first quarter of 2027. The project is expected to create 258 new jobs over three years. Based on the county's incentive policy, the project qualifies for a Level One incentive grant; however, the company is requesting a three-year grant instead of the standard five-year term. Estimated figures indicate approximately $598,000 in new property tax revenue during the incentive period, with a grant value of about $239,000 and a net benefit to the county of approximately $1.26 million over ten years. Mr. Shelton also noted the county intends to apply on the company's behalf for a $150,000 One North Carolina grant, for which the county would serve as a pass-through entity.

Mr. Shelton further explained that the project is expected to generate an additional 74 indirect and induced jobs, contributing approximately $5.5 million in wages and $14.8 million in economic activity. While the majority of the new positions would be entry-level distribution jobs, he emphasized that wages for these roles exceed local averages for similar positions, and the company offers a comprehensive and competitive benefits package. He also highlighted the company's strong community involvement in other locations, including charitable giving and employee volunteerism. Commissioners discussed the use of an existing building for the project and noted the potential for wage competition to positively impact local labor markets. Commissioner Klusman and others expressed appreciation for the company's benefits and community engagement practices.

Chairman Edds addressed concerns regarding wages being below the county's average, explaining that while this may limit access to certain state incentives, the project still provides meaningful opportunities for residents currently earning below average wages, particularly due to the strength of the benefits offered. He also noted that the county has requested the company consider contributing $25,000 toward teacher support initiatives to help address local education workforce challenges. Commissioner Caskey asked clarifying questions regarding the use of an existing facility and noted the potential for the project to increase wage competition within the county, while also highlighting the value of specific benefits such as military differential pay. Additional comments emphasized the company's strong family and childcare-related benefits.

At 3:57 p.m. Chairman Edds opened the Public Hearing and closed it after no one wished to speak.

On motion of Klusman, seconded by Pierce, the Board voted 4-0 to approve a Level 1 Grant to Project Rack for a three-year term and approve the submittal of a One NC Grant application to the NC Department of Commerce for $150,000.

Legislative Hearing for ZTA 01-26: James Newton

Shane Stewart, Assistant Planning and Development Director, presented a zoning text amendment request submitted by James Newton and represented by agent Jeremy Carter, explaining that the proposal relates to long-standing watershed regulations that have been in place since 1994. He reviewed current standards, noting that in Watershed II Balance and Watershed III Critical Areas, residential development typically requires a minimum one-acre lot size. He explained that while this lot-size approach is the most practical method for managing development, the proposed amendment would introduce a narrowly tailored alternative allowing consideration of a maximum 12 percent built-upon area for certain nonconforming lots created through circumstances beyond local control, such as court orders, wills, or expired statutory enforcement periods.

Mr. Stewart emphasized that the amendment would apply only in limited cases, ensuring that any development would remain compliant with state watershed protection requirements. He outlined that applicants would be required to submit site plans demonstrating compliance, and prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy, an as-built survey documenting impervious surface limits would be recorded with the Register of Deeds to ensure transparency for future property owners. He stated that the proposal would not alter the county's authority to enforce violations related to illegal subdivisions.

Mr. Stewart further explained that the amendment is intended to address challenges associated with existing substandard lots that cannot meet the minimum acreage requirement but have been legally established over time. He noted that the Planning Board reviewed the request and unanimously recommended approval. Generall discussion occurred regarding how the process would ensure compliance during permitting and prevent overbuilding beyond the allowed impervious limits. Additional discussion addressed the purpose of watershed regulations, focusing on protecting water quality and limiting development density to reduce runoff impacts.

Mr. Jeremy Carter, representing the applicant, spoke in support of the amendment, stating that it would allow more appropriate and consistent residential development on otherwise unusable or underutilized lots. He noted that, under current standards, some of these parcels could allow higher-density uses such as duplexes under existing provisions but not single-family homes, creating inconsistencies. Mr. Carter emphasized that the proposal would provide clarity and transparency through recorded plats showing allowable impervious area, benefiting property owners, buyers, and real estate professionals. He also highlighted that many nonconforming lots are created unintentionally through estate divisions or court actions, and the amendment would provide a reasonable mechanism for their use while maintaining watershed protections.

At 4:19 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 4-0 that ZTA 01-26 is consistent with the Rowan County Land Use Plan and is reasonable / necessary because the proposed amendment provides a pathway for density compliance for a limited set of outlier parcels not previously considered by the ordinance, relies on existing regulatory mechanisms, requires documented compliance, and balances meaningful watershed protection with the legitimate interests of land owners.

On motion of Piere, seconded by Klusman, the Board voted 4-0 to approve ZTA 01-26.

Debt Management Policy

Anna Bumgarner, Chief Finance Officer, presented a proposed debt management policy for board consideration, noting that it was largely the same as the version previously discussed during the Board's Annual Planning Retreat, with the addition of a new provision allowing the board to authorize the use of committed fund balance reserves to pay down debt in the future. She explained that the policy establishes guidelines and limits, including benchmarks consistent with those recommended by financial advisors and commonly used by peer counties. Commissioner Caskey asked for clarification regarding the new provision, specifically its connection to the Board's earlier discussions about allocating funds to the capital reserve and potentially using those funds to reduce debt, and Ms. Bumgarner confirmed that the language would allow for that flexibility if the Board chose to do so.

At the request of Chairman Edds, Ms. Bumgarner further explained provisions within the policy, including the preference for using revenue or self-supporting bonds, such as those tied to enterprise funds, rather than general obligation bonds when feasible. Additional discussion focused on key financial thresholds within the policy, including the proposed cap on total net debt as a percentage of the county's assessed property value and the percentage of annual expenditures dedicated to debt service. Ms. Bumgarner noted that Rowan County's current debt level is significantly below the proposed cap and within a conservative range compared to other counties. Chairman Edds emphasized that the purpose of establishing the policy is to maintain long-term financial stability, avoid overextending the county in future years, and position the county favorably with bond rating agencies. He noted that implementing formal financial policies, including debt management and fund balance guidelines, would strengthen the county's financial profile and could contribute to improved bond ratings over time.

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Klusman, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Debt Management Policy as proposed.

Legislative Hearing for Z 03-26: Morgan Land Development LLC

Shane Stewart, Assistant Planning and Development Director, presented a rezoning request submitted by Morgan Land Development for property located at 1840 Boston Road, noting that both the applicant and their engineer, Sam King of King Engineering, were present. He provided an overview of the property's location and surrounding context, including proximity to the Town of Landis, the Kannapolis ETJ, Interstate 85, and nearby industrial and commercial developments such as Landis Ridge and Overlook 85. He explained that the subject property, a 3.13-acre tract, had previously been rezoned twice—from Rural Agricultural to Conditional District Commercial Business Industrial (CBI-CD) in 2020 for a water well drilling contractor business, and again in 2021 to modify the approved site plan due to septic considerations.

Mr. Stewart stated that the current request represents the applicant's third rezoning and seeks to remove the conditional district component, converting the property to a straight CBI zoning designation. He explained that this change would provide greater flexibility by allowing a broader range of permitted uses under the base zoning district and eliminating the need for future rezoning requests should the property be expanded or sold. While noting that the existing conditional zoning included additional landscaping and buffering commitments, he explained that the underlying CBI standards would still apply. He also highlighted recent development activity in the surrounding area, including approved commercial and industrial projects, demonstrating a trend toward increased commercial use along the corridor.

Mr. Stewart reviewed site conditions and constraints, noting the relatively narrow configuration of the property and physical limitations that would restrict large-scale development. He stated that public notification requirements had been met, with minimal response from adjacent property owners, and that the Planning Board had unanimously recommended approval of the request.

Mr. King, speaking on behalf of the applicant, stated that he had prepared the site plans associated with the prior rezonings and confirmed that the property continues to be used for the existing business. He indicated that the applicant supports the request and asked for the Board's approval, noting that the primary purpose of removing the conditional district is to provide additional flexibility for future use, including potential resale of the property.

At 4:41 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 4-0 to that Z 03-26 is consistent with the 2025 Rowan County Land Use Plan and reasonable/appropriate based on the following:

- *This subject property lies at the intersection of 2 (two) major collectors which are designated as preferred for commercial development.*
- *Rapid and substantial commercial development of the surrounding areas represents a material change in conditions since the original conditional designation supporting the general CBI district change.*

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Caskey, the Board voted 4-0 to approve Z 03-26.

Public Hearing: Road Name Changes for Buttercup Lane and Cabin Drive

Pamela Ealey, Planning Technician presented two road naming petitions for the board's consideration, noting that neither request was expected to be contested and that all affected parties had signed off on the petitions. She first introduced a request to name Buttercup Lane, which is proposed for a private drive located off the 3000 block of Millbridge Road. She explained that the road would serve an additional home currently being constructed, as well as potential future lots that may be developed. The proposed name has been reviewed and approved by emergency services, and the request was brought forward for the required public hearing.

1. Currently Known As: No name driveway
   Proposed Name: Buttercup Ln
   Location: 3000 block of Millbridge Rd (SR 1350), China Grove, NC 28023
   Property Owners: Jody & Susan Johnson, Samuel & Taylor Pressley, Cory & Miriam Stirewalt, Kathy Patrick
   Reason for Change: drive has one (1) addressed structure with the potential for two (2) more structures sharing the same drive.

Ms. Ealey then presented a second request for Cabin Drive, located off the 6000 block of Brigham Young Ferry Road. She stated that the property owners currently have two homes on the road and are constructing a third, which necessitates formally naming the roadway. The proposed name has also been approved by Emergency Services. Both requests were submitted for public hearing consideration prior to board action.

2. Currently Known As: No name driveway Proposed Name: Cabin Dr Location: 6000 block of Bringle Ferry Rd (SR 1002), Salisbury, NC 28146 Property Owners: Lisa Ledbetter, David & Brooklyn Honeycutt, Archer Kesler, Kari & Michael Britschge Reason for Change: drive has two (2) addressed structures with at least one (1) more structure in development.

At 4:44 p.m. Chairman Edds opened the Public Hearing and closed it after no one wished to speak.

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Klusman, the Board voted 4-0 to approve the Road Naming Petitions for Buttercup Lane and Cabin Drive.

Board Appointments

On motion of Pierce, seconded by Klusman, the Board voted 4-0 to make the following appointments:

- *Raymond Sokoloski to a County Seat on the Franklin Volunteer Fire Department Fire Commission*
- *John Thomason to a County Seat on the Franklin Volunteer Fire Department Fire Commission*
- *Quinton Huffman to a County Seat on the Franklin Volunteer Fire Department Fire Commission*
- *Andrew King to the Fire Division Chief Seat on the Local Emergency Planning Committee*
- *Rachel Shoemaker to the Emergency Services Planner Seat on the Local Emergency Planning Committee*
- *Connie Johnson-Asero to an At Large Seat on the Therapeutic Recreation Board.*

Financial Report

Anna Bumgarner, Chief Finance Officer, presented the cumulative financial report for April, reporting total expenditures of $175 million, an increase of $12.9 million, or 7.9 percent, over the same period the previous year. Cumulative revenues through April totaled $189.8 million, reflecting an increase of $3.1 million, or 1.71 percent. Property tax collections through March were reported at $118 million, up $5.7 million, or 5.13 percent, compared to the prior year. Sales tax revenue through January totaled $26.5 million, an increase of $932,000, or 3.65 percent, with January collections alone totaling $3.5 million, an increase of $214,000, or 6.53 percent. She also reviewed the quarterly investment report, noting a total portfolio value of approximately $270.8 million and year-to-date interest earnings of $8.8 million through March 31.

Chairman Edds noted that the investment earnings equate to approximately five cents on the county's tax rate, emphasizing that without the county's newer investment strategies, the tax rate would effectively be higher. He further discussed the long-term value of economic development incentives, explaining that earlier incentive agreements were larger but are now beginning to phase out, allowing properties to transition onto the full tax roll. He requested that staff develop a reporting method, potentially as part of the annual retreat, to illustrate how expiring incentives contribute to increased tax revenues over time. Chairman Edds emphasized the importance of communicating to the public how commercial and industrial growth helps offset the overall property tax burden. Ms. Bumgarner agreed to work with staff to develop a way to present this information in a clear and meaningful format for the board.

Closed Session

At 4:52 p.m., on motion of Edds, seconded by Pierce, the Board voted 4-0 to enter into closed pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1) to consider approval of the minutes of the Closed Session held on May 18, 2026, as described by NCGS 143- 318.10(e), and pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5) to consider Property Acquisition.

Resume Open Session

At 5:11 p.m., Open Session resumed.

Adjournment

At 5:12 p.m., on motion of Pierce, seconded by Klusman, the Board voted 4-0 to adjourn.

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Sarah Pack, CMC, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board