

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Monday, July 28, 2025

5:00 P.M. – Closed Session

6:30 P.M. – Regular Session

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above-stated date and time at the Columbus County Historic Courthouse, 100 Courthouse Square, Whiteville, North Carolina 28472, in the Superior Courtroom on the second floor, for the purpose of conducting Regular Session.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Lavern Coleman, **Chairman**
Chris Smith, **Vice Chairman**
Brent Watts
Barbara Feathersen
Giles E. Byrd
Ricky Bullard
Scott Floyd

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Edwin H. Madden, Jr., **County Manager**
Amanda B. Prince, **Attorney**
Jana Nealey, **Clerk to Board**

APPOINTEES ABSENT:

Agenda Item #1: MEETING CALLED to ORDER:

At 5:00 P.M. Chairman Lavern Coleman called the regular meeting to order.

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into CLOSED SESSION in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(3) ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE, N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(4) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, and N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(6) PERSONNEL

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to recess regular session and enter into closed session, seconded by Vice Chairman Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Items #2: CLOSED SESSION in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G. N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(3) ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE, N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(4) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, and N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A)(6) PERSONNEL.

RECESS CLOSED SESSION and enter into REGULAR SESSION

MOTION:

At 6:24 P.M., Commissioner Bullard made a motion to recess closed session and enter into regular session, seconded by Vice Chairman Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

GENERAL ACCOUNT:

Attorney Amanda Prince gave the general account as follows:

The Commissioners discussed matters in accordance with attorney-client privilege, economic development, and personnel. No action was taken by the Board.

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve the general account as presented, seconded by Vice Chairman Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

Chairman Coleman recessed regular session until 6:25 P.M.

Regular Session resumes at 6:30 P.M.

Agenda Items #3 and #4: INVOCATION and PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE:

The invocation was delivered by Vice Chairman Smith. Everyone in attendance stood and Pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, which was led by Commissioner Floyd.

<p>6:30 PM -PUBLIC HEARING: Regarding a New Ordinance Designating the Requirement of Permits for Gatherings</p>
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Commissioner Byrd – Asked Attorney Prince if it is a violation for a group to meet at a school and then walk to a protest site.

Attorney Prince - It's not a violation of municipal rules. You're just not supposed to protest at the school.

Commissioner Byrd - But you're missing the point. They weren't protesting at the school. They were just meeting there as a group before walking together. They didn't hold any kind of protest or ceremony at the school.

Attorney Prince - So they weren't protesting, just parking there? That's the real question.

Commissioner Byrd - Right. They weren't protesting, just parking. Then they walked down the highway from the school.

Vice Chairman Smith - The schools are not in session.

Commissioner Byrd - I mean; it's not really affecting the school. But, you know, I understand why we set out to do this in the first place. I just don't want to take any action that would prevent someone from expressing their feelings, as long as it's within the law.

Attorney Prince - Well, as long as that's the plan, that they're all just walking along the side of the school, then they should be fine.

Commissioner Byrd - Like they said, they would meet there and then walk down the highway, over the bridge, to the lake. I mean, I believe that's how it was worded, or something along those lines.

Attorney Prince - But they are not going to protest in front of the school or are they protesting down the road?

Chairman Coleman - The word protest would be in there.

Commissioner Byrd - That's still a gray area. Could they use it for parking?

Attorney Prince - If the school allows it, then that would be fine.

Commissioner Featherson - So then, what would be the difference between what Commissioner Byrd is talking about and what happened at Williams Township School?

Attorney Prince - If it's school-sanctioned, then it's fine.

Commissioner Featherson - Okay, the median doesn't have anything to do with the school. That's part of the state road, is it not?

Attorney Prince - Right. So that area would fall under the jurisdiction of law enforcement.

Commissioner Featherson - Right. And that would be enforced through civil... um... by what? I guess what I'm really asking is: do we even need to have this ordinance if there's already a law in place regarding public gatherings?

Attorney Prince - Well, the law applies specifically to gatherings that occur on or near the edge of the roadway, in the right-of-way.

Commissioner Featherson - And there are multiple areas that deal with that kind of issue, right?

Commissioner Byrd - Is this going to be two public hearings or just one?

Attorney Prince - Just one.

Commissioner Bullard - And at any time, we can revisit this and make adjustments as needed.

Attorney Prince - Right.

Commissioner Watts - I'd like to say, I think the county has done a great thing by stepping in and stopping what was happening at the school, regardless of what it was. We have kids in

school, and their safety should be our top priority. I believe we've taken a positive step toward putting meaningful measures in place.

I appreciate the attorneys and everyone involved in helping protect the students of this county, no matter which school they attend. Like I've said before, and I'll say again: if you want to protest or complain, come here. Speak to the school board. But leave the kids out of it.

Chairman Coleman - Because once you start disrupting a class or the school environment, that disruption can carry over for two or three days. In my opinion, the students, and even the teachers, aren't able to fully concentrate on learning. This is about keeping protests and other activities that don't pertain to school away from school grounds, at least until there's a proper time and place for them.

Commissioner Byrd - See, those protest groups designated for the school were scheduled to meet at a set time. The group that met at the lake gathered after school hours, on a Sunday afternoon. I just didn't want anything in the ordinance that would prevent that kind of peaceful gathering from being allowed.

Commissioner Watts - I understand what you're saying, and I agree. If it's on a Sunday afternoon and there are no kids there, that's different.

Commissioner Byrd - That's right. We're all taxpayers, we help fund the schools. But when kids are in school, they don't need any distractions. No one does.

Commissioner Bullard - We're using the word "schools" throughout all of our paperwork, does that include the community college?

Attorney Prince - Yes, it includes all places of public and private education.

Commissioner Watts - There should be no child, or teacher, asked to deal with disruptions at school. And if this is approved, it should help prevent that.

Commissioner Byrd - I think we need to include that in the motion, to clarify that no gatherings are allowed during any school activities, and that a specific time should be designated.

Commissioner Featherson - I wholeheartedly agree with you, Commissioner Watts, no child should have to worry about any physical, mental, or emotional distress. We want all children to receive a good education, and we want all of them to be treated equally, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

So when incidents occur, like what happened down in Williams Township, the school board should be responsible for handling it. Otherwise, it should fall to the sheriff's department or law enforcement to address the issue.

In my opinion, this ordinance seems rather redundant, since there are already local, state, and federal laws in place. I'm either not fully understanding the purpose of this, or it just appears to be unnecessary duplication.

Attorney Prince: The state laws apply to roads and traffic, but not necessarily to public places.

Commissioner Featherson: What exactly does it mean when it says 'no fighting words'? Could you provide an example of fighting words? Also, how is a 'reasonable person' defined in this context?

Attorney Prince: Words that incite violence.

Chairman Coleman: Do we have any further discussion? If not, we'll close the public hearing.

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item # 5: APPROVAL of AGENDA, TAX REFUNDS & RELEASES:

a. July 21, 2025

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve Agenda Item #5 as presented, with an addition of agenda Item 27-A Economic Development – Approval of the Purchase Agreement for Economic Development, and to table Agenda Items 8 and 9. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bullard and passed unanimously.

Tax Refunds and Releases

<i>Refunds</i>		Amount: \$0.00
Britt, Lisa	PROPERTY: 00000	Total: \$200.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2024	Account: 12-00637
Refund user fee. No can vacant.		Bill#: 24725

<i>Refunds</i>		Amount: \$40.25
Clarida, Betty	PROPERTY: 00000	Total: \$665.10
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2020-	Account: 13-02425
Refund portion of value. Value of SW/MH. Refund Chadbourn City(32.79) Refund Col		Bill#: 99999
Cty Interest(22.30) refund Col Rescue(1.00) refund Cole Service(2.00)		

<i>Refunds</i>		Amount: \$0.00
Cummings, Robert D	PROPERTY: 00000	Total: \$800.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 21-24	Account: 09-04170
Refund user fee. Can was db to swmh account.		Bill#: 99999

<i>Refunds</i>		Amount: \$57.94
Dowridge, Tonya	PROPERTY: 00000	Total: \$997.58

This proposed development on Old Lake Road directly threatens all of that and raises serious concerns about water quality.

Our members have many concerns, but we remain focused on those that fall within our bylaws, specifically those that aim to protect the park. The main issue I want to address today is water quality and the risk of flooding.

On June 18 of this year, we sent a letter and a list of concerns about this project to the County Commissioners. In that correspondence, we stated that we do not support approval of this project for general use planning and development, nor any future project that poses a similar threat.

I'm here today to follow up on a few key points.

Blackwater, designated by the Department of Environmental Quality as an Outstanding Resource Water, is incredibly rare. In that area, there are three species of endemic fish, four species of endemic mosses, and a federally threatened aquatic species that exist nowhere else. These must be protected.

The PD Aquifer feeds alkaline-rich water into Deep Creek, creating an almost perfect pH balance in the lake. That's why swimming in it feels so refreshing, and why the lake supports such a healthy fishery.

If untreated groundwater runoff from Big Creek flows directly into the lake, it could disrupt that balance, altering the floodplain and pH levels, and turn the lake into a single-species environment, where only perch survive.

This development proposes that up to 85% of the land would become impervious surfaces like streets and rooftops, instead of remaining a working forest that naturally captures, filters, and cleans rainfall before it flows into Big Creek.

To put the potential impact in perspective: if we experience another 3 inches of rain over two days, like we did during Hurricane Florence, that would result in over 673 million gallons of additional runoff entering Big Creek and eventually the lake.

On behalf of the Friends of Lake Waccamaw State Park, I respectfully request that the County Commissioners deny this development proposal.

Chairman Coleman – Thank you, Mr. Smith.

Nancy Council - Good evening, Commissioners, County Manager, staff, fellow citizens, and members of other departments.

I'm here tonight representing citizens opposed to the development at Lake Waccamaw. We represent literally thousands of people who are against this project.

That includes those who spoke out at the May 27th Planning Board meeting, including at least one board member; the 200 people who attended the June 10th Q&A at East Columbus High School; the 200 more who attended the June 29th community roundtable led by Chief Jacobs;

and the July 6th meeting with Mayor Wilson, as well as the July 3rd coverage in the *News Reporter*.

Nearly 2,000 people have signed the Friends' petition on Facebook. There are also nearly 1,400 members in the Friends of Waccamaw State Park Facebook group. Add to that the many who have submitted public comments and countless other concerned citizens. That's a lot of people.

We stand united, and firmly, in opposition to this project. It is completely unreasonable for such a development to be proposed in an ecologically fragile green area.

Just take a look at the hydrology map for this region of North Carolina. It shows how fortunate we are to have so many waterways, clearly more here than anywhere else in the state. These waterways are everywhere, and we must ask ourselves: Should we really allow them to be put at risk?

This is just one example of how this project could irreparably harm our basin and the surrounding ecosystems.

We understand that this project is not currently on the agenda, and we've been told that many of you oppose it. So we're here tonight to say thank you for your support, and for hearing our concerns.

We respectfully ask that you continue to oppose this project when the time comes.

Thank you.

Chairman Coleman – Thank you, Mrs. Council.

Chairman Coleman – Next speaker is Chief Michael Jacobs. Second call, Chief Michael Jacobs. Chief Jacobs never came to the podium for comments.

Russell Tyler - Good afternoon. I'd like to ask: does the number 137 mean anything to you?

That's the number of fatalities in Kerr County as of July 4th, 2025. Two people died just this month. The flooding was described as "a deluge no one saw coming."

Campgrounds like Texas Hill Country Campground and Blue Arby Park are located in high-risk flood zones along the Guadalupe River and surrounding areas. To be clear, we have areas near the Waccamaw River that have been officially designated as high flood risk, with partial flooding recorded on more than 40 days in a year.

This same area has flooded six times in the last ten years.

For example:

- Tropical Storm Deb in August 2024 led to EMS rescuing a stranded camper downstream.

- Other significant floods occurred during storms in 2023, and during Hurricanes Matthew (2016), Florence (2019), and several others, all six incidents contributing to this pattern of repeated flooding.

Let's talk about regulation.

Under Article 9, Standard Regulations for Campgrounds, the purpose of this ordinance is clearly stated:

To regulate and guide the establishment of campgrounds in order to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of Columbus County.

In Section G, under Design Standards, it states that the requirements are the minimum standards for new campgrounds.

Section D specifically requires that all spaces must be located on elevations that are not susceptible to flooding.

I understand there have already been FEMA letters issued for violations in this area. But it's important to note: FEMA guidelines do not override state building codes.

The North Carolina Building Code, specifically Section G601, introduced in 2018, clearly prohibits the placement or erection of recreational vehicles in coastal high flood areas and flood way zones. Your responsibilities as a county do not change simply because of FEMA maps. The code is the code.

Attorney Prince – Mr. Tyler you three minutes are up.

Shelia Gerald Evans - I live on River Road, and that's my main reason for coming to speak with you today, to talk about the road.

Once you leave the paved portion of River Road, everything from there to the end is private property. I think people have lost sight of that. It's important to understand that this is the only access to the RV parks that the previous speaker mentioned.

This road does not have a road maintenance agreement. I'm not for or against anyone, but the fact is, each of us who live there is responsible for maintaining our own part of the road.

In 2023, the Department of Transportation did a traffic engineering report showing there was one car every 15 minutes on that road. We later installed a camera ourselves and tracked the traffic. Based on our data and calculations, we are now up to one car every six minutes. That's a major increase in just two years.

But that road was never meant for commercial traffic. It was designed for landowners to access their private property. And now, the public use of that road is becoming essential to the success of a business, but it's still our private property.

So let's talk about that business. If someone is profiting from the use of our private road, we are not being compensated. I want to know: who is going to compensate us? Will it be the county? Or will it be the business owner? Either way, someone needs to.

In the meantime, we are left dealing with trash, traffic, and trespassers. Children are being dropped off on our private land without permission. The red lines that mark our boundaries are being destroyed, and people are filling the area with debris and junk.

We live in and around marshland. The land is constantly shifting, and we are already vulnerable. So when developments are built up around us by 3 feet or more, all it does is push more water onto our properties.

Now this new development has been given approval to intentionally drain more water into the same area, the exact region where we're already experiencing flooding. I'm trying to understand the logic: Are we intentionally pushing residents out?

We need our leaders to stand up for us, the people who already live here. Tell developers: You're not going to flood people out just because they don't "belong" in the new vision. Because honestly, not everyone moving in is a friend to the community. We've seen this happen in Brunswick County, and it's happening in counties all across the state.

Please, I'm asking you to think about the real impact of this development on the people who call this place home. We need you to prioritize residents over profit.

Please, stand up for us.

Frank Galloway - One thing I do know, is about the sewage from this development.

What are you going to do with the sludge?

When you build a sewage treatment plant, where is that waste going to go? Is the county going to bring their sludge and dump it on my land? Because I already told them, no.

And here's the big problem: once you spread sludge on land and it rains, it runs off and flows right back into the Waccamaw River.

That's a big issue. So you've got to think this all the way through, not just the beginning, but all the way down the line.

That's all I wanted to say.

Edward Davis - Good to see each and every one of you. My name is Edward Davis, and I live in Whiteville.

I'm currently employed with Consumer Services, Farmland Preservation Division. I retired from one county and now work in 12 counties across the state.

What I do involves working with the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to evaluate the Cost of Community Services (COCS), which essentially helps determine the tax burden that new development places on a community.

North Carolina is growing faster than any other state in the country, and we are fortunate in Columbus County to have long been considered a rural area. But neighboring counties have already started to experience rapid growth, and we can learn from them, both in terms of what to do, and what not to do.

We have a choice: we can be proactive or reactive.

In my work, I've looked at counties across the region, including Hoke County, Richmond County, New Hanover, and Brunswick County. And one thing I've learned is this: an increased tax base from residential development does not necessarily mean financial gain for the county.

Let me explain.

When we talk about water, sewer, fire protection, EMS, police, road maintenance, and more, those are all costs that come with growth, and they often outweigh the tax revenue generated by residential expansion.

I also recommend including stormwater management as one of those cost centers, especially with the kinds of developments being proposed.

Now, when we talk about Cost of Community Services studies, here's what we typically find:

- For every dollar collected in taxes from farmland or open space, it costs the county about 30 to 50 cents in services.
- For industrial development, the cost is about 50 cents per dollar collected.
- But for residential development, it usually costs \$1.50 to \$2.00 for every dollar collected in taxes.

In short: residential growth is often a net loss from a fiscal standpoint.

That's why I recommend this board consider conducting a Cost of Community Services (COCS) study. It can give the county an accurate picture of the long-term financial impact of different types of development.

Our department helps coordinate these studies, and you can even apply for grant funding to have one completed. NC State University is preparing to start offering these studies again, and there are also private consultants who specialize in them.

So, I strongly encourage the board to consider initiating a Cost of Community Services analysis, and let's get the data to see what this growth could really cost us.

Andy Anderson - I didn't come here to talk about statistics or figures, even though my degree is in Public Administration. I actually came to talk about my mom.

She's 89 years old. Over her 40 years as a teacher, she poured everything she had, everything she collected, into investing in a house on Waccamaw Shores for me, the home we share.

We have a house on the lake and another on the canal side of Waccamaw Shores. I just wanted to say that she loves that place, and I do too.

So I'm simply asking that you put our current residents first. These are the people who elected you, and they trust you. I trust you, too, to make the right decisions for the people you were chosen to represent.

Let's build a Columbus County where growth serves the people, not the other way around, because prosperity isn't measured in rooftops, and it's not measured in rules.

It's measured by how well we honor and protect the people who already live here and love this county.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Teresa Blanks - I am here to express deep concern regarding the proposed rezoning project in the Waccamaw Basin, which aims to create mixed housing and commercial development.

As a dedicated member of this community and an advocate for environmental stewardship, I strongly urge you to reconsider the approval of this project and to halt the issuance of any permits or further action in this matter.

The Waccamaw Basin is not only an ecologically rich and diverse landscape, but also a sacred place with significant cultural and historical importance.

For generations, the Waccamaw Siouan people have lived, owned, hunted, and cared for these lands, sustaining their way of life through a deep connection to this environment. These lands are an irreplaceable heritage, and their destruction would be a loss to both our environment and our shared human history.

This development threatens to harm the rivers and natural landscape, including:

- Deforestation
- Pollution
- A substantial decrease in biodiversity

The Waccamaw Basin is home to delicate ecosystems that rely on the preservation of its forests, wetlands, and clean water sources.

Clearing these lands for urban development would:

- Disrupt wildlife habitats
- Contribute to soil erosion
- Cause water contamination
- Exacerbate climate change

These are issues that already pose serious concerns for our region and the planet as a whole.

Moreover, the environmental degradation from this project could increase the risk of flooding and other climate-related disasters. The destruction of natural barriers, such as wetlands and forests, would leave surrounding communities more vulnerable and compound existing environmental challenges.

In these critical times, we must make decisions that promote ecological resilience, not actions that further strain our environment.

As a grateful and concerned citizen, I respectfully ask you to uphold the principles of ecological stewardship and climate responsibility.

The choices we make today will have a lasting impact on future generations, not only in terms of their environment but also their health and quality of life.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Commissioner Byrd - Let me say this: The board hasn't approved anything. It hasn't come before the board at this time. In reference to your comment about rescinding it, this board hasn't voted on it yet, anyway.

Commissioner Floyd - Mr. Chairman, may I say something?

In case there's any doubt, I'm with you, and I stand with you against it.

Robert Hughes - I'm a licensed general contractor in both North and South Carolina, and I want to follow up on the issue concerning River Road and the RV park that was mentioned earlier, specifically, the Riverview Lane RV Park.

As a general contractor, I am required to follow the recommendations and guidelines outlined in the North Carolina Building Code. One of those codes, which Mr. Tyler referenced earlier, is G601.1, which clearly states: "Placement prohibited."

What's currently being considered by the Board of Adjustments is whether to approve a special use permit for this RV park. I want to make it clear, we are completely opposed to it, and for reasons that go beyond mere code violations.

As another speaker mentioned earlier, this is also an issue of overuse of a private road. I am a private landowner on that road, and I fully agree: a commercial enterprise should not be using

privately owned property, especially not a road that is not certified or maintained by the North Carolina Department of Transportation, to operate a business like an RV park.

Back to code G601.1, it explicitly states that the placement of recreational vehicles shall not be authorized in coastal high hazard areas or in flood-prone zones. The land under consideration for this RV park falls entirely within a high-risk flood area.

In light of that, and referencing the tragic flooding incident in Texas that was mentioned earlier, we believe similar circumstances could absolutely happen here if this project proceeds.

So, I respectfully ask that you assist in denying this request, and urge the Board of Adjustments to reject the approval of a special use permit for this RV park.

Thank you for your time.

Johnny Edge - I'd like to make a few comments tonight.

The purpose of this gathering is to hopefully bring the leaders and citizens of Columbus County together to help our county become what it is truly capable of being in the future.

Government should be of the people, by the people, and for the people. I think everyone here agrees that, as representatives of the people, all voices should be heard, and their concerns should be thoughtfully considered, not just to tell them what they want to hear, but to do what is truly best for Columbus County.

I'm talking about strengthening our communities, improving quality of life, and enhancing communication between citizens and county leadership. These are things we can and should work on together.

As you all know, there are a lot of people here in Columbus County, and I've spoken to many of them. My concern, and theirs, is what's best for everyone. From those conversations, and from speaking with some of you commissioners, it's clear that communication is one area that needs attention.

Many citizens don't fully understand the reasons behind certain decisions or laws, and when that happens, it's easy to fall into opposition or become frustrated. The solution is clearer communication.

I believe the people want that, and I'm sure you, as leaders, want the same thing: to see Columbus County thrive.

So, I'd like to ask each of you to consider this: How can the people in your districts best communicate with you? I'd like each of you to share that with your constituents, because if we can strengthen that connection, we can work together to bring Columbus County up from where it is today and make it a leading example in the state of North Carolina.

It's important for citizens and leaders to be honest about what they don't know, so that together, we can find the right solutions. That's how we move Columbus County from the bottom of the list of 100 counties, to the top.

Thank you for your time.

Chairman Coleman: That will conclude the Public Input section.

Agenda Item #8: TABLED ADMINISTRATION – RECOGNITION and SUPPORT for the COLUMBUS COUNTY SOFTBALL and BASEBALL TEAMS HEADED to the 2025 WORLD SERIES:

Agenda Item #9: TABLED EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

County Manager Eddie Madden recognized Karla Beck from Facility Services as the Employee Spotlight.

Agenda Item #10: ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - APPROVAL of the NEW ORDINANCE DESIGNATING the REQUIREMENT of PERMITS for GATHERINGS:

Attorney Amanda Prince requested approval of a new ordinance designating the requirement of permits for gatherings. This action item is associated with the previously held public hearing.

Commissioner Byrd - Are you saying that time elements will be included to ensure that nothing takes place during school hours or during any school activity?

Attorney Prince - Yes, the motion should reflect that, including football games or any other school-related events.

MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve with time elements to be included, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

PICKETING AND GATHERINGS - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Picket or picketing means to make a public display or demonstration of sentiment for or against a person or cause, including protesting which may include the distribution of leaflets or handbills, the display of signs and any oral communication or speech, which may involve an

effort to persuade or influence, including all expressive and symbolic conduct, whether active or passive.

Sidewalk means that portion of the street right-of-way which is designated for the use of pedestrians and may be paved or unpaved and shall include easements and rights of ways.

Street means the entire width between property or right-of-way lines of every way or place of whatever nature, when any part thereof is open to the use of the public as a matter or right, for the purposes of vehicular traffic, including that portion that is known as the shoulder of the roadway and the curb. The terms "highway" and "street" and their cognates are synonymous as used herein.

Sec. 1 - Notice of intent to picket.

- (a) Notification required. The organizer of a picket that the organizer knows, or should reasonably know will be by a group of 25 or more individuals shall give notice of intent to picket to the Sheriff or designee at least 48 hours before the beginning of the picket. The notice of intent to picket shall include the following information:
 - (1) The name, address and contact telephone number for the organizer of the picket;
 - (2) The name, address and contact telephone number of the person giving notice of intent to picket if different from the organizer;
 - (3) The name of the organization or group sponsoring the picket;
 - (4) The location where the picket is to take place;
 - (5) The date and time the picket will begin and end; and
 - (6) The anticipated number of participants, and the basis on which this estimate is made.
- (b) Receipt of notification. Upon notice of intent to picket given in accordance with subsection (a), the Sheriff or designee shall immediately issue a receipt of notice. The receipt shall contain all information stated in the notice. The organizer of a picket shall be responsible for maintaining the receipt, and shall present it when so requested by a law enforcement officer or other city official.
- (c) It shall be unlawful for any person to violate any provision of this section.

Sec. 2 - Picketing regulations.

- (a) Picketing may not be conducted:
 - (1) On a median strip; or
 - (2) At a location directed, focused, or targeted at a particular private residence; or

- (3) At a location within 0.1 of a mile or directly adjacent to a location for public or private education.
- (b) Picketing shall not disrupt, block, obstruct or interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic or the free passage of pedestrian or vehicular traffic into any driveway, pedestrian entrance, or other access to buildings, which abut the public sidewalks.
- (c) Written or printed placards or signs, flags, or banners carried by individuals engaged in picketing shall be of such a size and/or carried on areas, as to allow safe and unobstructed passage of pedestrian or vehicular traffic. The staff or pole on which a sign, flag, or banner may be carried shall be made of corrugated material, plastic, or wood, and shall not exceed 40 inches in length and shall not be made of metal or metal alloy. If made of wood, the staff or pole shall be no greater than three-fourths inch in diameter at any point. A staff or pole must be blunt at both ends.
- (d) If more than one group of picketers desire to picket at the same time at or near the same location, law enforcement officers may, without regard to the purpose or content of the message, assign each group a place to picket in order to preserve the public peace. Members of a group shall not enter an area assigned to another group. Priority of location shall be based upon which group of picketers arrived first.
- (e) Spectators of pickets shall not physically interfere with individuals engaged in picketing. Picketers and spectators of pickets shall not speak fighting words or threats that would tend to provoke a reasonable person to a breach of the peace.
- (f) Picketers and picketing shall be subject to all applicable local, state and federal laws.
- (g) Nothing in this section prohibits a law enforcement officer from issuing a command to disperse in accordance with North Carolina General Statute § 14-288.5 in the event of a riot or disorderly conduct by an assemblage of three or more persons.
- (h) It shall be unlawful for any person to violate any provision of this section.

Sec. 2 Penalties

Any person in violation of this ordinance shall be cited as follows:

- (a) First offense \$100.00;
(b) Second offense \$250.00;
(c) Third offense and each subsequent violation \$500.00.

Each offense shall be per incident with no limitation due to time. Payment shall be made to the Sheriff's Office before the close of business at 5:00 pm within 30 days of citation issuance, including weekends and holidays or appropriate legal action shall follow.

Agenda Item #11: ATTORNEY'S OFFICE – APPROVAL of LEASE with EASTER SEALS, FORMERLY PORT HEALTH SERVICES:

Attorney Amanda Prince requested approval of the lease renewal with Easter Seals, formerly Port Health.

MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve, seconded by Chairman Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

LEASE RENEWAL ASSIGNMENT AMENDMENT AND RESTATEMENT

THIS LEASE RENEWAL, ASSIGNMENT, AMENDMENT, AND RESTATEMENT (this "Amendment") is entered into as of the date of the last signature set forth below (the "Effective Date"), by and between COLUMBUS COUNTY, a local political subdivision of the State of North Carolina ("Landlord"), and EASTER SEALS UCP NORTH CAROLINA & VIRGINIA, INC., a North Carolina nonprofit corporation ("Tenant").

WHEREAS, Landlord and O Tenant entered into that certain Lease Agreement dated July 1, 2024 (as amended prior to this Amendment, the "Lease") a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference pertaining to certain office space and/or other premises more particularly described in the Lease;

WHEREAS, Tenant desires to extend the Leasehold Interest under the Lease, under the same lease terms, except as modified in this Amendment until June 30, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Landlord consents to the extension of the Leasehold Interest and the terms of this Amendment.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual and reciprocal promises contained herein and for other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, Landlord, Original Tenant, and New Tenant hereby agree to the terms of this Amendment set forth below:

1. Effective July 1, 2025, the term of the Lease shall be reinstated for, if applicable, a period of one (1) year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026.

2. This Amendment is intended to be a modification to the Lease. Unless otherwise defined herein, all capitalized terms used in this Amendment shall have the same definitions ascribed in the Lease.

3. Except as modified and amended by this Amendment, all terms and conditions of the Lease remain in full force and effect.

4. This Amendment may be executed in counterparts, including electronic signatures delivered via electronic transmission, which counterparts shall constitute a single valid and binding agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Landlord, Original Tenant, and New Tenant have executed this Amendment to be effective as of the Effective Date.

Agenda Item #12: ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - APPROVAL of the AMENDMENT to the LEASE with the TOWN of CHADBOURN REGARDING the DEPARTMENT of AGING:

Attorney Amanda Prince requested approval of the amendment to the lease with the Town of Chadbourn regarding the Department of Aging.

MOTION:

Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

FACILITY USE AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered in to this ____ - day of _____, 2025, by and between Columbus County Department of Aging , P.O. Box 1327, 827 Washington St., Whiteville, NC 28472, (hereinafter "CCDOA") and Town of Chadbourn, 602 N. Brown Street, Chadbourn NC 28431, (hereinafter "CHADBOURN").

WITNESSETH:

That for a consideration of \$500.00 per month, the Chadbourn Civic Center, located at 403 N. Pine Street, Chadbourn, NC 28431, will be made available to the CCDOA for use as a Senior Center and Nutrition Site for the elderly, and for any other activities sponsored by the CCDOA, except for election dates and the Strawberry Festival. The parking lot, restrooms, chairs, tables, and other available equipment may be used by the CCDOA. CCDOA will be allowed to provide additional equipment for programs.

The CCDOA will be allowed to remove equipment belonging to CCDOA at the termination of the agreement.

CHADBOURN will provide insurance on the building.
CCDOA will provide insurance on contents owned by the CCDOA.

Listed below are expenses and the party responsible for paying such expenses.

CCDOA is responsible for paying:

- Telephone
- Electrical repairs *Minor
- Plumbing *Minor
- Parking lot
- Heating & Air Conditioning *Minor
- Interior Repairs *Minor
- Repaint Interior with labor and materials
- Household janitorial services only

- Extermination services interior bugs and rodents only
- Exterior repairs *Minor

CHADBOURN is responsible for paying:

- Electrical utilities
- Water
- Sewer
- Exterior repairs **Major
- Plumbing **Major
- Act of God/Vandalism
- Garbage pickup
- Extermination services exterior bugs and rodents only
- Electrical repairs **Major
- Heating & Air Conditioning Major

* Minor repairs are repairs costing \$100.00 or less.

**Major repairs are repairs costing more than \$100.00.

This Agreement will be effective July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2030.

Any changes to this Agreement must be agreed upon by both parties.

Either party may cancel this Agreement by giving the other party 90 days prior written notice.

COLUMBUS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGING

By: _____

Kristie Massey, Executive Director
P.O. Box 1327
Whiteville, NC 28472

By: _____

Edwin H. Madden
Columbus County Manager

Date: _____

TOWN OF CHADBOURN

By: _____

Phillip C. Britt, Mayor
602 N. Brown Street
Chadbourn, NC 28431

Date: _____

This instrument has been preaudited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

Columbus County Finance Officer

Approved by County Staff Attorney

Agenda Item #13: ADMINISTRATION – APPROVAL of the VOTING DELEGATE and ALTERNATE for the 2025 NC LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE:

County Manager Eddie Madden requested approval of the Voting Delegate and Alternate at the 2025 NC Legislative Conference.

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to nominate Chairman Coleman as the voting delegate and Commissioner Featherson as the alternate delegate for the 2025 North Carolina Legislative Conference, seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #14: TRANSPORTATION – APPROVAL of the VEHICLE LEASE AGREEMENTS with OUR VENDOR TRANSDEV:

Transportation Director Joy Jacobs requested approval of amendments to the Vehicle Lease Agreements with our vendor Transdev due to the addition of a new vehicle received in June.

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Featherson. The motion unanimously passed.

VEHICLE LEASE AGREEMENT AMENDMENT #1

This Vehicle Lease Agreement Amendment #1 (hereinafter referred to as "Amendment") made and entered into this 21 day of July, 2025 between Columbus County (hereinafter referred to as "Lessor"), and Transdev, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as "Lessee"). This Amendment is amending Vehicle Lease Agreement (hereinafter referred to as "Agreement"), made and entered into the 1st day of July, 2025 between Columbus County and Transdev, Inc. This Amendment is a subcontract of the agreement(s) between the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Lessor, for Project No.(s) 21-39-076S. All other provisions contained in the agreement(s) between the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Lessor are herein incorporated by reference.

Witnesseth:

Addition to Article I

Leased Vehicles: The Lessor hereby leases to the Lessee the vehicle(s) described in Exhibit 1 attached hereto and made a part hereof (hereinafter referred to as vehicle(s)), upon the conditions and covenants set forth below. The Lessee shall utilize the project equipment in accordance with the procedures and guidelines set forth in Federal Transit Administration Circulars 5010.1C, dated October 1, 1998; 9040.1E, dated October 1, 1998; and 9070.1E, dated October 1, 1998, or any subsequent revisions or amendments thereto; the project description set forth in the project application and the Transportation Development Plan or Community Transportation Service Plan for Columbus County.

Addition to Article II

Terms of Lease and Commencement Date: The terms and commencement date of the Agreement shall be incorporated herein by reference. In the event of noncompliance with this Amendment and/or the Agreement, the Lessor may terminate this Amendment and/or Agreement by giving the Lessee 30 days' advance written notice.

Addition to Article V

Repair of Fire Damage or Other Casualty-Replacement in Case of Theft or Other Loss: Lessee will assume full responsibility for any type of loss or damage to the vehicle(s) and it will be the sole responsibility of the Lessee to repair or replace the vehicle(s), if this becomes necessary. Lessor has no obligation for any loss in regard to the vehicle(s).

EXHIBIT I

The vehicle(s) referred to in the preceding Agreement to which this exhibit is attached are described as follows:

Description of Vehicles

Model Year	Model	VIN Number	Vehicle Type
2020	MVAN	2C4RDGBG0LR175776	Minivan
2025	MVAN	2C4RC1BG3SR527635	Minivan
2019	STARLITE	1FDEE3FS2KDC59758	20ft LTV Lift
2020	U4XE	1FDVU4X86LKB17597	Lift Conversion Van
2026	E-350	1FDEE3FN9TDD10555	20 Ft LTV
2019	S4XE	1FTRS4XM8KKA77143	Lift Conversion Van
2022	X2CG	1FDAX2CG1NKA69808	Lift Conversion Van
2019	S4XE	1FTRS4XM4KKA53793	20ft LTV
2015	MINIVAN	2C4RDGCGXFR719509	Minivan
2024	Starlite	1FDEE3FN2RDD33636	20 Ft LTV
2024	E-350	1FDEE3FN0RDD45896	20Ft LTV Lift
2025	E-350	1FDEE3FN7SDD08432	20 FT LTV Lift
2025	E-350	1FDEE3FN8SDD08374	20 FT LTV Lift
2021	Starcraft	1FDEE3FNXMDC20591	20 Ft Lift
2021	Starcraft	1FDEE3FN1MDC20592	20 Ft Lift
2021	E-250 Allstar	1FDEE3FN9MDC09825	22 Ft Lift
2022	K1CF	1FDZK1C85NKA69413	Lift Conversion Van
2022	K1CF	1FDZK1C8XNKA70024	Lift Conversion Van

THE VEHICLE(S) CANNOT BE LEASED TO A SUB-LESSEE WITHOUT WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM THE LESSOR AND THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DIVISION.

Agenda Item #15: MIS DEPARTMENT– APPROVAL of FUNDS for EMAIL FILTERING and ARCHIVING SERVICES PROVIDED by VIRCOM:

MIS Director Steve Wagner has requested approval of funds in the amount of \$26,877.40 for email-filtering and archiving services from Vircom. This covers all county departments and has been pre-budgeted for FY 26.

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairman Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

**Invoice****Sold To****Columbus County**

125 Washington Street
Whiteville NC
USA
28472

Att Steve Wagner

Date 07/01/2025
Salesperson Veronica Teti

Customer # 18481
Invoice # IN-000050776
P.O. # signed

Description	Amount
MCPROV - modusCloud Professional, 1 YR (643 users) Start Date: 07/02/2025	26,877.40

Payment Terms Net 30 days

Sub-Total 26,877.40

Pricing Disclaimer: Prices may be subject to change with a 30-day notice.

WIRE PAYMENT TO:

Royal Bank of Canada, 1 Place Ville-Marie-Ground Floor.
Montreal (Qc) CANADA H3C 3B5
BRANCH# 00001
INSTITUTION CODE# 003
CLEARING CODE CC # 003-00001
US ACCOUNT# 4013033
SWIFT# ROYCCAT2

ABA #021000021 (JP Morgan Chase, Intermediary Bank)

OR SEND PAYMENT TO:

Vircom inc.
3551 St. Charles Blvd, Suite 604
Kirkland (Quebec) CANADA H9H 3C4

Total (\$ US) 26,877.40
Payment received 0.00

Amount due (\$ US) 26,877.40

INVOICE IN US FUNDS

Agenda Item #16: OPIOID SETTLEMENT– APPROVAL of the DRUG COURT BAILIFF POSITION and the AMENDED FY 25/26 RESOLUTION and POSITION COUNT ASSOICATED:

Opioid Settlement Consultant Cynthia Wiford requested approval of the Drug Court Bailiff position in the amount of \$64,959.28 and the amended FY 25/26 resolution to reflect the additional allocation and position count to reflect the position.

County Manager Eddie Madden - Just to make you aware, we have secured funding for the position, and work is scheduled to begin in September. The position does require availability during court sessions. We do have the capacity within the current budget to fund this full-time position, which totals \$64,959.

Commissioner Byrd - Now, they're approving the position or funding the position, what about a vehicle or anything like that? Is there any way we could get that funded within the same budget?

County Manager Eddie Madden- I believe everything related to equipment and uniforms is included, but I'm not sure if vehicles are part of that.

Commissioner Byrd - We can't get a new vehicle.

Logistics Captain Robert Creech – The grant only funds the position. No vehicles.

County Manager Eddie Madden - Everything was included in the increase to the position count for the Sheriff's Office, and this would result in an increase to the overall number of positions.

Commissioner Bullard - How long will the position be funded?

County Manager Eddie Madden- The opioid settlement will continue for 18 years, and I suspect this will be a highly successful program moving forward.

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.



Columbus County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff William A. Rogers

PO Box 280
817 Washington Street
Whiteville, NC 28472
www.columbussheriff.com



To Columbus County Manager,

In reference to the new Drug Bailiff Position, I have attached a PAF for review and an estimate on fuel for the Deputy while performing his duties as a Drug Bailiff. Based on an average of what other counties are using, performing similar duties we estimate fuel costs around \$7,800.00 a year. After the first year, we will have a more definitive figure of what the actual cost will be. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

SHERIFF W. A. ROGERS

Sheriff W.A. Rogers

WHEREAS Columbus County has received Opioid Settlement Funds pursuant to these national settlement agreements and deposited the Opioid Settlement Funds in a separate special revenue fund as required by section D of the MOA;

WHEREAS section E.6 of the MOA states that, before spending opioid settlement funds, the local government's governing body must adopt a resolution that:

- (i) indicates that it is an authorization for expenditure of opioid settlement funds; and,
- (ii) states the specific strategy or strategies the county or municipality intends to fund pursuant to Option A or Option B, using the item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to identify each funded strategy; and,
- (iii) states the amount dedicated to each strategy for a specific period of time.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, in alignment with the NC MOA, Columbus County authorizes the expenditure of opioid settlement funds as follows:

1. First strategy authorized

- a. LEADERSHIP, PLANNING AND COORDINATION
- b. Exhibit A-1
- c. \$100,000
- d. July 1, 2025 through End date June 30, 2026
- e. Columbus County to update its strategic plan as required by the MOA and support grant writing efforts to leverage the opioid settlement funds to expand services if opportunities become available and coordinate implementation of the plan as needed.
- f. Provider: Columbus County contract with ACT Associates, LLC

2. Second strategy authorized

- a. HARM REDUCTION-NALOXONE DISTRIBUTION
- b. Exhibit A-7
- c. \$18,000
- d. July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026
- e. Columbus County provides Naloxone for its County and municipal first responders as needed.
- f. Provider: Columbus County.

3. Third strategy authorized

- a. PREVENT OVERDOSE DEATHS AND OTHER HARMS (HARM REDUCTION)
- b. Exhibit B: H-5
- c. \$15,000
- d. July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026
- e. Software support for EMS database to track Opioid and other drug overdoses occurring in the County EMS system.
- f. Provider: Columbus County

4. Fourth strategy authorized

- a. SUPPORT PEOPLE IN TREATMENT AND RECOVERY
- b. Exhibit B: B-2
- c. \$289,080.00
- d. July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026
- e. Columbus County needs to continue to execute a contract for an estimated need of 10-12 beds per day/annually with The Healing Place of New Hanover County for services. The County has entered into a contract with The Healing Place of New Hanover County to contract for beds available to adult men and women from Columbus County. The Healing Place of New Hanover County will allow individuals with Opioid Use Disorder to be admitted and offer the use of Vivitrol (one/month/injectable Naltrexone) to assist the individual with Opioid cravings.
- f. Provider: The Healing Place of New Hanover County

5. Fifth strategy authorized

- a. CONNECT PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP TO THE HELY THEY NEED
- b. Exhibit B: C-16
- c. \$91,500.00
- d. July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026
- e. Hire an independent contractor to assist Columbus County residents in identifying and accessing treatment services. The contractor will serve as the County Liaison for Columbus County referrals to The Healing Place of New Hanover County. The contractor will organize and update as needed, a County resource guide that contains information regarding available services for Opioid Use Disorder, Substance Use Disorder, and Mental Health conditions. The resource will also list other supports that can be utilized by County residents needed to support and gain recovery. The contractor will provide in-service training to community groups on topics of stigma, Naltrexone (Narcan), SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) and other topics as assigned and needed in the community to intervene with the County's individuals and families affected by Opioid use. Funds allocated include cost of independent contractor and materials needed to provide public education on relevant subjects, acceptable mileage, meal and training reimbursements.
- f. Provider: Columbus County

6. Sixth strategy authorized

- a. PREVENT MISUSE OF OPIOIDS
- b. Exhibit B: G-9
- c. \$30,000
- d. July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026
- e. Columbus County implemented a 6-10th grade Evidence Based Practice Prevention program in the Whiteville and Columbus County School Systems. The program was implemented year 1 in 6th grade. Funds will be allocated to implement the curricula in the 6th and 7th and 8th grades for the school year beginning in Fall 2025. The project would train up to 20-6th grade teachers and up to 1725 students in year 3, across both school systems.
- f. Provider: Botkin "Lifeskills Training" – Evidence Based Prevention curricula.

7. Seventh Strategy Authorized

- a. PREVENT MISUSE OF OPIOIDS
- b. Exhibit B: G-9
- c. \$42,700
- d. July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026
- e. Columbus County and Whiteville School Systems will be installing Vape Detectors in the high schools to identify students who are using Vape products on school property. Vape Detection will assist the school in identifying students who may be vaping opioids and other illicit substances on school property and assist in early intervention into harmful activities.
- f. Provider: Columbus County and Whiteville School systems via a contract with Lockstep Technology Group.

8. Eighth strategy authorized-amended, amended-2

- a. SUPPORT TREATMENT AND RECOVERY COURTS THAT PROVIDE EVIDENCE BASED OPTIONS FOR PERSONS W OUD AND ANY CO-OCCURRING SUD.MH CONDITIONS.
- b. B: D-3
- c. \$260,992.75 + \$29,500.00 (extension for south Brunswick contract from July 1, 2025-October 1, 2025) +\$29,964.72 for the addition of a .5 FTE Sheriff's Deputy to staff the Recovery Court. Total amended amount = \$320,457.47 Amendment 2-Total amended 2 amount = \$64,959.28 increase Sheriff Deputy to 1.0 plus benefits (\$49,659.28 = 1.0 FTE plus benefits), Fuel allotment (\$7800), \$2500 Uniform allotment (\$2500), Training and Associated Travel allotment (\$3000), Drug Court Laptop for Deputy position (\$2000). Total Amended -2 amount for program = \$385,416.75
- d. July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026

- e. Provide funding for up to 1 year of operations for a Columbus County Recovery Court operating out of the District Court. Budget will include staff, court personnel mandatory national training, urinalysis, supplies, assessment and case management software systems, Allocated funds will support registration, travel, lodging, and per diem expenses. Purpose of the funding is to support the development of a Recovery Court which meets the national drug court standards and will qualify the Court for potential future grant funding to sustain it in the future.
- f. Provider: Columbus County.

9. Ninth strategy authorized

- a. PREVENT MISUSE OF OPIOIDS
- b. B:G-2
- c. \$20,000
- d. July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026
- e. Maintain current County Resource List and regularly update Quit-It Columbus Facebook Resource Page
- f. Provider: Columbus County

10. Tenth strategy authorized

- a. PREVENT MISUSE OF OPIOIDS
- b. B: G-1
- c. \$30,000
- d. July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026
- e. Update Marketing materials, develop outreach efforts at community education about opioids and other harmful substance use to outlying areas and municipalities in Columbus County including posters, brochures, bill-boards, mailers, yard signs.
- f. Provider; Columbus County via contract with Josh Fraim and Indigo Media, Inc.

11. Eleventh strategy authorized

- a. SUPPORT PEOPEL IN TREATMENT AND RECOVERY
- b. B: B-7
- c. \$7500
- d. July 1 2025- June 30, 2026
- e. Provide (up to \$5000) to transport Columbus County residents to Jacksonville and Greenville for detoxification/stabilization services for conditions related to their opioid, dual diagnosis or other substance use issues requiring specialized assessment and stabilization. Provide (up to \$2500) to individuals who are in recovery from Opioid and other substance use disorders who need financial assistance in the forms of rent or utility deposits for recovery housing needs.
- f. Provider: Columbus County.

12. Twelfth strategy authorized

- a. LEADERSHIP, PLANNING AND COORDINATION
- b. B: J-4
- c. \$72,000
- d. July 1, 2025-June 30 , 2026.
- e. This supports two part-time positions within the County Government: Grants Coordinator and Accounting Technician who account for the Opioid Settlement Funding and outcomes reporting requirements.
- f. Provider: Columbus County.

13. Thirteenth strategy authorized

- a. PREVENT OVERDOSE AND OTHER HARMS
- b. B: H-13
- c. \$42,700
- d. July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026

- e. With the rise in fentanyl and other illicit drugs, deputies need to be equipped with technology that will protect the staff during a search and seizure which may include highly toxic substances harmful to the individuals conducting the searches. These funds will provide a narcotics detector for the Columbus County Sheriff's Department which will prevent the deputies from exposure to the toxic substances like fentanyl.
- f. Provider: Columbus County Sheriff's Department.

The total dollar amount of Opioid Settlement Funds appropriated across the above named and authorized strategies is **\$1,084,832.03**.

Adopted this the ... day of....., 2025.

Agenda Item #17: OPIOID SETTLEMENT– APPROVAL of the CONTRACT for the QUIT-IT COLUMBUS FACEBOOK and RESOURCE PAGE with ACT ASSOCIATES:

Opioid Settlement Consultant Cynthia Wiford requested approval for the ACT Associates contract, in the amount of \$20,000, for upkeep of the Quit-It Columbus Facebook page and resource site. This allocation has been approved in the FY 25/26 Opioid Settlement Budget.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Smith made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

1. Purpose of Employment

The County of Columbus (hereafter COUNTY), retains and contracts with Addiction Consulting and Training (ACT) Associates, LLC registered to do business in the State of North Carolina (hereinafter referred to as Contractor) to provide services to Columbus County pursuant to the Scope of Services below.

ACT Associates, will maintenance and upkeep services for the Quit-It Columbus Facebook and county opioid resource web pages:

- a. Collect and report local Columbus County data onto the Quit-It Facebook page weekly to provide community awareness and education information about Opioid and other drug use information and localized Columbus County data on opioid and other drug use.
- b. Participate in the marketing activities including the Quit-It Columbus Facebook page which provides community education and awareness of SUD resources to county residents.
- c. Collect routine data on marketing tools to report to the County Opioid Settlement Outcomes measures.

It is understood and agreed, by and between Contractor and COUNTY, that the maximum amount paid to Contractor under this Contract will be TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARES.

COUNTY understands that all bills are due when received. COUNTY agrees to pay any outstanding balance within THIRTY (30) days of receiving the bill.

2. Terms and Conditions

The term of this Contract shall be from July 1, 2025- June 30, 2026. Parties shall comply with all Federal and North Carolina laws.

3. Contract Deliverables:

a. By June 30, 2026, provide up to 160 HOURS @\$125.00/hour (\$20,000) of technical assistance time to Columbus County to fulfill the above described tasks.

Scope of Work Summary of Tasks

The Independent Contractor will serve as the primary contact for the Opioid Settlement Process and activities as outlined in the tasks identified above.

Distinguishing Features of the Contract Position

This is a contract position which provides professional services for Columbus County and will report to the Columbus County Manager and work closely with the Columbus County Opioid Steering Committee. . The Independent Contractor will provide the necessary equipment and software needed to perform the duties as outlined. The Contractor will, at a minimum, provide a monthly report to the County Manager outlining the activities provided under the Contract term and be available to provide updates to various County Committees including the County Commissioners and others as needed.

Illustrative Examples of Work

- Cynthia Wiford, Primary Consultant with ACT Associates, LLC will be the primary contact for the Opioid Settlement process and activities within the County. Kristy Termina, ACT Associates, LLC will provide the technical assistance for the upkeep of the Facebook page and County Opioid Resource web page.
- Independent Contractor will be required to coordinate schedule of activities and functions with the County operations.
- Cynthia Wiford and other ACT Associates, LLC staff as assigned will be involved in activities of the contract.
- Complete required activity/function reports as required to comply with NC's Opioid Settlement regulations.
- Performs related duties as required.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Thorough knowledge and understanding of SUD/ODU resources and the guiding principles of addiction recovery.
- Understanding of the federal confidentiality rules regarding substance abuse communications and records (HIPAA 42 CFR) in addition to HIPPA rules and regulations.
- Thorough knowledge of proper English usage, vocabulary, spelling and basic mathematics.
- Thorough knowledge of modern office practices and technology.
- Thorough knowledge of terminology used in the profession; has considerable knowledge of occupational hazards and safety precautions; has considerable knowledge of the methods of case recording and report preparation.
- Knowledge of recent developments, current literature and sources of information regarding National Drug Court Standards.
- Knowledge of the laws, ordinances, standards and regulations pertaining to the specific duties and responsibilities of the position i.e. NC Opioid Settlement MOU and requirements.
- Knowledge of and skill in the use of computers for word and data processing and records management.
- Ability to react calmly and quickly in emergency situations.
- Ability to react professionally and decisively in confrontational situations; is able to deal safely and appropriately with persons exhibiting anger and/or threatening behavior.
- Ability to advocate and promote practices of cultural sensitivity and responsiveness in all daily interactions.
- Ability to develop, promote and practice teamwork in all activities.
- Ability to maintain effective relationships with personnel of other departments, professionals and members of the public through contact and cooperation.
- Ability to take the initiative to complete the duties of the position without the need of direct supervision.
- Ability to read and interpret complex materials pertaining to the responsibilities of the job.
- Ability to assemble and analyze information and make written reports and records in a concise, clear and effective manner.

Contractor must have visual acuity to be able to prepare and analyze data and figures for accounting, perform extensive reading, operate a computer and other office equipment, determine accuracy and thoroughness of work, observe general surroundings and activities. Verbal communication is required for expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word. Hearing is required to perceive information at normal spoken word levels.

Working Conditions

Individual is an independent contractor and work will be performed in a location identified by the Contractor and schedule is also set by the Contractor. Position will be required to be onsite at County provided Court offices when necessary to conduct Court functions.

Minimum Education and Experience

(a) a graduate of a college or university with a Master's degree in a human service field and has minimum of 5 years of full-time, post-graduate degree accumulated MH/DD/SAS experience with the population served, or a substance abuse professional who has five years

of full-time, post-graduate degree accumulated supervised experience in alcoholism and drug abuse counseling.

or

(c) a graduate of a college or university with a bachelor's degree in a human service field and has 10 years of full-time, post-bachelor's degree accumulated MH/DD/SAS experience with the population served, or a substance abuse professional who has ten years of full-time, post-bachelor's degree accumulated supervised experience in alcoholism and drug abuse counseling; or

(d) a graduate of a college or university with a bachelor's degree in a field other than human services and has twelve years of full-time, post-bachelor's degree accumulated MH/DD/SAS experience with the population served, or a substance abuse professional who has twelve years of full-time, post-bachelor's degree accumulated supervised experience in alcoholism and drug abuse counseling.

Special Requirements

The individual must exercise impeccable ethical standards and avoid any potential conflicts of interest. Individual must show proof of liability insurance and list Columbus County and present the County with a current Certificate of Insurance upon execution of the contract.

5. Independent Contractor.

Contractor acknowledges that, in entering into this contract and providing services, Contractor is acting as an independent contractor; Contractor shall not be deemed or construed to be employees of the Board of Columbus County Commissioners or COUNTY at any time during the duration of this Contract. Contractor shall be solely responsible for payment of all required State and Federal taxes PROVIDED HOWEVER, that Contractor shall provide such documentation as COUNTY deems necessary to meet any and all federal and state tax guidelines regarding employment contract employees.

As such, Contractor is not entitled to, nor shall be eligible for, any benefits provided by the COUNTY to any of its permanent or temporary employees, including, but not limited to, vacation leave, sick leave, retirement, longevity and group insurance.

6. Indemnity.

Contractor shall maintain professional liability insurance and indemnify and hold the Board of Columbus County Commissioners and COUNTY, its agents, assigns and

employees, harmless against any loss and all claims, demands, causes of actions, or other liability, including attorneys' fees, on account of contract or personal injuries or death or on account of property damages arising out of or relating to the work to be performed by Contractor hereunder, resulting from the negligence of or the willful act or omission of Contractor.

I have read and fully understand this Contract and I acknowledge receipt of a conformed copy of this Contract and I hereby state that I have the authority to enter into said Contract.

This Contract supersedes any prior contracts. Any prior contracts are null and void.

This the 11th day of July 2025.

County of Columbus

By: _____
Lavern Coleman, Chairman
Columbus County Board of Commissioners

Cynthia M. Wiford, MRC
CEO ACT Associates, LLC

Approved as to form:

Columbus County Staff Attorney

This instrument has been preaudited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Contract Act.

Columbus County Finance Officer

**Agenda Item #18: OPIOID SETTLEMENT – APPROVAL of the CONTRACT
EXTENSION with THE DOOR of NC, LLC:**

Opioid Settlement Consultant Cynthia Wiford requested approval of the contract extension with The Door of NC LLC in the amount of \$84,000 annually and was pre-budgeted for FY 25/26.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Smith made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

1. Purpose of Employment

The County of Columbus (hereafter COUNTY), retains and contracts with THE DOOR OF NORTH CAROLINA, LLC, registered to do business in the State of North Carolina (hereinafter referred to as Contractor) to provide services to Columbus County Health Department pursuant to the Scope of Services below.

2. Fee

Rate of pay will be \$84,000.00 annually or \$7000.00/month. Contractor will submit a monthly invoice, receipt for expenses including mileage at the IRS reimbursable rate and related pre-approved training expenses. Contractor will be expected to submit completed monthly reports regarding activities and referrals conducted during the month by the 3rd working day of the month. Since this is a contract position, the County is not liable for any benefits, workmen's compensation or taxes withheld. These are the responsibility of the Contractor.

It is understood and agreed, by and between Contractor and COUNTY, that the maximum amount paid to Contractor under this Contract will be EIGHTY-SEVEN THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 DOLLARS (\$87,5000.00). COUNTY understands that all bills are due when received. COUNTY agrees to pay any outstanding balance within THIRTY (30) days of receiving the bill.

3. Terms and Conditions

The term of this Contract shall be from May 30, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

4. Scope of Services:

Scope of Work Summary of Tasks

To function as the community hub for accessing information regarding prevention, treatment, and referral opportunities. Utilizing a public health educator and case manager model, this individual will work with all agencies to provide community education about substance use issues and community resources and to connect individuals to treatment and resources necessary for recovery including peer

support, transportation, education, employment opportunities, medical care and other social determinants of health.

Distinguishing Features of the Contract Position

This is a contract position for professional services for the citizens of Columbus County and will report to the Columbus County Health Department Director and work closely with the Columbus County Opioid Steering Committee members. Work is performed under general supervision and is evaluated on the basis of knowledge and demonstrated proficiencies, compliance with legal requirements and standards, and other performance criteria. The Columbus County Health Department will provide all necessary software needed to perform the duties including cell phone and service, software and County email address for the Contractor. The Contractor will, at a minimum, attend monthly meetings with the Health Department Director to review all scheduled activities for the Contractor, identify groups to provide outreach and community education to and any other activities related to the SUD issues occurring within the County.

Illustrative Examples of Work

- The Resource Coordinator will be the hub for enabling easy access to Substance Use Disorder and Opioid Use Disorder (SUD/OD) information and resources.
- Contractor is required to be on-call and carry a county cell phone for the purposes of providing immediate response to county residents who request substance use treatment services.
- Contractor will be expected to attend County Opioid Steering Committee meetings, prepare activity reports and routinely give updates on related job activities occurring to meet the County's Opioid and other substance use strategic plan.
- Clearly communicate about this program throughout the county, via media, churches, schools, businesses, etc.
- Respond to questions and inquiries about SUD/OD services and resources.
- Develop and maintain up-to-date information for the County's resource guide including access and contact information for SUD/OD treatment, home and community-based services and social supports.
- Utilizing a public health/case manager model, the Resource Coordinator will work with all agencies, in addition to the public, to connect individuals to treatment and resources necessary for recovery including resources generally thought to be outside the realm of substance abuse treatment such as housing, employment, food, and transportation assistance in addition to providing connects to medical care, education and other social and spiritual resources.
- Provide information for and prepare various activity reports as required by the Opioid Settlement, Committee and any related grant that may be obtained to further the substance use treatment services operating within the county.
- Operate a variety of office equipment, including a computer, printer, copier, telephone, etc.; uses clerical and computer supplies.
- Interact and communicate with immediate supervisor, grant project manager, other County department heads and employees, clients and family members, other social service and health professionals, various outside social service / health agencies, attorneys, court personnel, child care providers, school personnel, consultants and the general public.

- Attends meetings, training, workshops, conferences, etc., as required to enhance job knowledge and skills.
- Maintain professional licensure, ensuring educational and experience requirements are met.
- Complete required activity/function reports as required to comply with NC's Opioid Settlement regulations.
- Performs related duties as required.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Thorough knowledge and understanding of SUD/ODU resources and the guiding principles of addiction recovery.
- Thorough knowledge of the methods, procedures and policies of the Columbus County Health Department.
- Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of social work, especially in the areas of substance abuse treatment and services; is able to identify an individual's needs and to develop and implement effective plans to help meet those needs.
- Understanding of the federal confidentiality rules regarding substance abuse communications and records (HIPAA 42 CFR) in addition to HIPAA rules and regulations.
- Thorough knowledge of proper English usage, vocabulary, spelling and basic mathematics.
- Thorough knowledge of modern office practices and technology.
- Basic knowledge of online skills and abilities and willingness to learn new online skills to insure resource page is kept current and up to date.
- Thorough knowledge of terminology used in the profession; has considerable knowledge of occupational hazards and safety precautions; has considerable knowledge of the methods of case recording and report preparation.
- Knowledge of recent developments, current literature and sources of information regarding social services.
- Knowledge of the laws, ordinances, standards and regulations pertaining to the specific duties and responsibilities of the Contractor i.e. NC Opioid Settlement MOU and requirements.
- Knowledge of and skill in the use of computers for word and data processing and records management.
- Knowledge of caseload management methods.
- Ability to prepare training materials for community groups and deliver effective training to diverse groups within the County on a variety of SUD related topics.
- Ability to work with colleagues to identify the needs of citizens requesting help and to determine appropriate services; is able to monitor cases and the welfare of individuals and to take action as needed to protect adults' / children's rights and well-being.
- Ability to react calmly and quickly in emergency situations.
- Ability to react professionally and decisively in confrontational situations; is able to deal safely and appropriately with persons exhibiting anger and/or threatening behavior.

- Ability to advocate and promote practices of cultural sensitivity and responsiveness in all daily interactions.
- Ability to develop, promote and practice teamwork in all activities.
- Ability to develop and maintain positive, trusting, age-appropriate relationships with clients and others involved in the care of clients.
- Ability to plan and present informative educational presentations to clients and other individuals and organizations.
- Ability to assist in coordinating activities with other County departments, health / social service agencies, medical personnel, school personnel, etc., in order to accomplish goals.
- Ability to maintain effective relationships with clients, personnel of other departments, professionals and members of the public through contact and cooperation.
- Ability to take the initiative to complete the duties of the Contractor without the need of direct supervision.
- Ability to learn and utilize new skills and information to improve job performance and efficiency.
- Ability to read and interpret complex materials pertaining to the responsibilities of the job.
- Ability to assemble and analyze information and make written reports and records in a concise, clear and effective manner.

Contractor must have visual acuity to be able to prepare and analyze data and figures for accounting, perform extensive reading, operate a computer and other office equipment, determine accuracy and thoroughness of work, observe general surroundings and activities. Vocal communication is required for expressing or exchanging ideas by means of the spoken word. Hearing is required to perceive information at normal spoken word levels.

Working Conditions

Contractor is an independent contractor and work will be performed in a location identified by the Contractor and schedule is also set by the Contractor. Contractor will be required to carry a cell phone to answer emergency referral calls about availability of services and segue county residents to correct service to meet their substance use needs.

Minimum Education and Experience

(a) an individual who holds a license in a human services field and is to practice in the State of North Carolina. Preference will be given to a LCAS/CCS. Other licenses are acceptable if individual has demonstrated four years of full-time accumulated experience with substance use disorders. Provisional license, certificate, registration or permit issued with demonstrated experience as identified above.

(b) a graduate of a college or university with a Master's degree in a human service field and has one year of full-time, post-graduate degree accumulated MH/DD/SAS experience with the population served, or a substance abuse professional who has one year of full-time, post-

graduate degree accumulated supervised experience in alcoholism and drug abuse counseling.

(c) a graduate of a college or university with a bachelor's degree in a human service field and has two years of full-time, post-bachelor's degree accumulated MH/DD/SAS experience with the population served, or a substance abuse professional who has two years of full-time, post-bachelor's degree accumulated supervised experience in alcoholism and drug abuse counseling; or

(d) a graduate of a college or university with a bachelor's degree in a field other than human services and has four years of full-time, post-bachelor's degree accumulated MH/DD/SAS experience with the population served, or a substance abuse professional who has four years of full-time, post-bachelor's degree accumulated supervised experience in alcoholism and drug abuse counseling.

Special Requirements

Because a significant portion of this position is working with citizens of Columbus County who need to access substance abuse and/or mental health treatment services, the Contractor must exercise impeccable ethical standards and avoid, at all costs using the referral service to refer individuals to their own or an affiliate of their own private practice. If any referral to their own practice occurs, this will be grounds for immediate termination of the Contract. This does not restrict the Contractor from referring her private practice clientele to any service offered or paid for by the County. Individual must show proof of liability insurance and list Columbus County and present the County with a current Certificate of Insurance upon execution of the contract.

5. Independent Contractor.

Contractor acknowledges that, in entering into this contract and providing services, Contractor is acting as an independent contractor; Contractor shall not be deemed or construed to be employees of the Board of Columbus County Commissioners or COUNTY at any time during the duration of this Contract. Contractor shall be solely responsible for payment of all required State and Federal taxes PROVIDED HOWEVER, that Contractor shall provide such documentation as COUNTY deems necessary to meet any and all federal and state tax guidelines regarding employment contract employees.

As such, Contractor is not entitled to, nor shall be eligible for, any benefits provided by the COUNTY to any of its permanent or temporary employees, including, but not limited to, vacation leave, sick leave, retirement, longevity and group insurance.

6. Indemnity.

Contractor shall maintain professional liability insurance and indemnify and hold the Board of Columbus County Commissioners and COUNTY, its agents, assigns and employees, harmless against any loss and all claims, demands, causes of actions, or other liability, including attorneys' fees, on account of contract or personal injuries or death or on account of property damages arising out of or relating to the work to be performed by Contractor hereunder, resulting from the gross negligence of or the willful act or omission of Contractor.

I have read and fully understand this Contract and I acknowledge receipt of a conformed copy of this Contract and I hereby state that I have the authority to enter into said Contract.

This Contract supersedes any prior contracts. Any prior contracts are null and void.

This the 13th day of June, 2025.

County of Columbus

By: _____

Lavern Coleman, Chairman

Columbus County Board of Commissioners

The Door of North Carolina, LLC.

By: Nicole M. Hopkins, Manager

Approved as to form:

Columbus County Staff Attorney

This instrument has been preaudited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Contract Act. _____

Columbus County Finance Officer

Agenda Item #19: SHERIFF'S OFFICE – APPROVAL of the RESOLUTION for the GOVERNORS HIGHWAY SAFETY GRANT:

Sheriff Bill Rogers requested approval of the resolution for the Governors Highway Safety Grant (GHSP).

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.

1. That the project referenced above is in the best interest of the Governing Body and the general public; and
2. That Sheriff William A. Rogers
(Name and Title of Representative) is authorized to file, on behalf of the Governing Body, an application contract in the form prescribed by the Governor's Highway Safety Program for federal funding in the amount of \$ 104,426.00
(Federal Dollar Request) to be made to the Governing Body to assist in defraying the cost of the project described in the contract application; and
3. That the Governing Body has formally appropriated the cash contribution of \$ 44,754.00
(Local Cash Appropriation) as required by the project contract; and
4. That the Project Director designated in the application contract shall furnish or make arrangement for other appropriate persons to furnish such information, data, documents and reports as required by the contract, if approved, or as may be required by the Governor's Highway Safety Program; and
5. That certified copies of this resolution be included as part of the contract referenced above; and
6. That this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Agenda Item #20: EMERGENCY SERVICES - APPROVAL of BUDGET AMENDMENT for NC 911 PASP FUNDING:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Featherson. The motion unanimously passed.

FY 25/26

BUDGET AMENDMENT

Emergency Management - Fund 44

Agency Head Signature: *[Signature]*

Date Prepared:	July 10, 2025	Date Received in Finance:	
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[illegible]


Budget Code			REVENUES		Requested
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification		Increase or (Decrease)
044	3425	499101	FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED		\$240,769
			Total Net Revenue		\$240,769
Explanation of Increase or Decrease:					
FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED FOR THE NEW 911 CENTER FOR ITEMS THAT WOULD NORMALLY BE PURCHASED WITH PSAP FUNDING. THESE FUNDS HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY 911 BOARD.					
FOR THE NEW 911 CENTER.					

☒ This budget revision has been reviewed by the Columbus County Finance Officer.

Signature Deborah M. Wooley

Date 7/11/2025

☒ This budget revision has been reviewed by the Columbus County Budget Manager/County Manager:

Signature 

Date 7-11-25

Notes:

This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:

		Date
Signature		

Agenda Item #21: DSS – MONTHLY REPORT for JUNE 2025:

DSS Director Dwella Hall will present the DSS monthly report for June 2025.

Monthly Administrative Update

**For June, 2025
July 21, 2025 Meeting**

Energy Programs & Funding

As of July 7, 2025, North Carolina state lawmakers are at a standstill on budget negotiations and haven't come to an agreement regarding the state's budget for the new fiscal year, which began on July 1.

This means that funding for the Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) has not been approved at the state level for the current fiscal year.

Funding for CIP is typically provided annually, the ongoing budget negotiation in NC means that state-level approval for full allocation in the current fiscal year is still pending.

We have been instructed until funds are available in NCFAS all CIP applications should be processed and denied as **no funds available**.

In preparation for the CIP program; on June 18, two of my Supervisors Kayla Murphy & Tammy Vereen held a round table discussion with community partners to discuss the upcoming guidelines and to share available resources in the community. Representatives in attendance were from Duke Energy, BEMC, Dept. of Aging, Coastal Horizon Flourishing Families, Waccamaw Siouan Tribe, and Families First. It was a very informative meeting for all in attendance.

SNAP Food & Nutrition & Medicaid Funding

The 2025 federal budget reconciliation bill introduces changes to Medicaid and SNAP, potentially leading to significant funding cuts, increases state costs, and eligibility restrictions in North Carolina. The full impact of these changes on the state and its residents is still being reviewed by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

PATH NC

All of child welfare staff have gone through the required training for the launch of PATH NC. Our region will go live July 14th. We are expecting full support from the state level on the launch date to aide and guide them through this transition.

Unity in the Community Event

Our Event was a Success! I am so overwhelmed, by the amount of support we received from local community partners. This event was not just about the unity for the community it was also to bring about unity within our agency and I have to say, mission accomplished. I cannot thank my staff enough for the way they pulled together to bring this vision to light. We are looking forward to our 2nd annual Unity in the Community next year.

June Collections

Child Support \$ 413,401

Program Integrity \$ 24,862.89

*Respectfully Submitted,
Dwella M. Hall
Director*

June 2025
Human Services

Adult Services (APS)

APS Reports Accepted: 10
County Wards: 30
Number of Payee Cases: 7
Adults Served APS: 0

Children's Protective Services (CPS)

Reports Accepted: 17
Reports Screened out: 20
Families Receiving In-Home Services: 10
Children Served: 23
Contacts with Families Monthly: 75
Assessments:

Foster Care

Foster Children in Foster Homes: 71
Children Placed Outside County: 31
Agency Adoptions: 1
Pending Adoptions: 0
Total Foster Homes Licensed: 6
Total Children in Foster Care: 71

Work First Employment (TANF)

Applications Taken: 19
Applications Approved: 3
Individuals Receiving Benefits: 108
Entered Employments: 0
Number in Non-Paid Work Experience: 0

June 2025
Human Services (continued)

Program Integrity

Collections for Fraud: \$24,862.89

New Referrals: 2

Cases Established: 0

Day Care

Children Receiving Day Care Assistance: Not Available

Children on the Waiting List: Not Available

Amount Spent on Day Care Services: \$241,000.00

June 2025
Economic Services

Food & Nutrition

Applications Taken: 288

Applications Approved: 313

Active Cases: 5,722

Benefits Issued: \$1,901,258.00

Participants Served: 11,278

Adult Medicaid

Applications Taken: 101

Redeterminations: 101

Applications Processed: 118

Total Medicaid Cases: 15,427

Total Individuals Receiving: 21,917

Medicaid Transportation (NEMT)

Number of Medicaid Transportation Trips: 897

Amount Requested for Reimbursement: \$26,743.00

Family & Children's Medicaid

Applications Taken: 160

Applications Processed: 337

Redeterminations: 460

Child Support

Absent Parents Located: 59

Orders Enforced: 841

Active Cases: 3,002

Collections: \$413,401.00

Economic Services Board Report Darlene Jenkins-Parks, Income Maintenance Administrator Vacancies/Updates/News for June 2025

Energy Programs

As of July 7, 2025, North Carolina state lawmakers are at a standstill on budget negotiations and haven't come to an agreement regarding the state's budget for the new fiscal year, which began on July 1. This means that funding for the Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) has not been definitively approved at the state level for the current fiscal year.

Funding for CIP is typically provided annually, the ongoing budget negotiations in NC means that state-level approval for full allocation in the current fiscal year is still pending. We have been instructed until funds are available in NCFast all CIP applications should be processed and denied as no funds available.

In preparation for the CIP program; on June 18, 2025; Supervisors Kayla Murphy & Tammy Vereen held a round table discussion with Community Partners to discuss the upcoming guidelines and to share available resources in the community.

Representatives in attendance were from Duke Energy, BEMC, Dept. of Aging, Coastal Horizon Flourishing Families, Waccamaw Siouan Tribe, and Families First. It was a very informative meeting for all in attendance.

Family & Children Medicaid Programs

Intake team continues to be fully staffed. Applications can be taken in person, paper or electronic. This team determines the initial eligibility then case is passed onto a review caseworker to maintain the case.

Recertification team struggles with the additional frozen IMC II position not approved in the July 2026 county budget. Re-certification staff are responsible for reviewing the continued eligibility of current Medicaid recipients in the F & C program. Includes verifying information, communicating with recipients, and ensuring timely benefits issuance upon completion of the redetermination process.

Adult Medicaid Programs

Intake team currently has (1) frozen IMC II position not requested in the July 2026 budget. Intake team process and determines eligibility in assessing an individual's financial situation, including income & resources, age, blind or disability requirements for specific programs. Once approved for benefits the case is passed onto a review caseworker to maintain the case.

Adult Medicaid Recertification team currently has (1) IMC II vacancy as of June 21st due to retirement. The recertification team process the annual recertifying of all beneficiaries' eligibility for Medicaid coverage. This review helps ensure that individuals continue to meet the program's requirements & receive the appropriate level of coverage. They also address in change in circumstances during the certification period & work a multitude of reports.

LTC/CAP/SA team continues to struggle with the position freeze of (2) IMC III's. The (2) IMC III's are handling all applications for LTC, CAP, and SA; they currently are handling all (4) active ongoing caseloads which includes the re-certifications and any changes to these cases.

Non-Emergency Transportation (NEMT) team is fully staffed handle daily phone calls, new & updated assessments to check eligibility, scheduling for vendor pickups, as well as billing for reimbursement for vendors and mileage trips.

Food & Nutrition Services Program

Intake team currently have (1) frozen position. Intake team process and determines FNS eligibility.

Recertification team continues to struggle (3) frozen positions. This unit handles monthly re-certifications, make changes and working reports timely, assisting clients daily with multiple calls and face to face contact. One position was filled effective June 23, 2025.

Child Support:

Establishment team continues to have (3) vacant positions, with one Agent position filled effective 7/21/2025. This unit handles all establishment caseloads, including Interstate. They have seen a massive increase of Medicaid Child Support referrals the month of June; with the ending of the waiver for Medicaid recipients to cooperate with child support.

Enforcement team has (1) frozen position. Both teams continue to increase the number of cases placed on the court.

HUMAN SERVICES BOARD REPORT

Marcee Swindell-Thompson- Program Manager
Vacancies/Updates/News for June 2025

Intake/Investigation/Assessment:

The unit continues to face shortages in staffing. Currently one new hire just started leaving two vacancies in the CPS unit. We continue to have one Vanguard employee with extensive experience who assists with CPS investigations. The unit has participated in the trainings as we prepare to go live with Path NC. Monthly Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) meetings are conducted onsite, to review agency data, policy updates, and address casework concerns.

In-Home Services:

The unit currently has one SW vacancy and one Supervisors position vacant. Currently I H S has ten open cases at this time, which leaves the staff available to assist with shortage in Foster Care and in CPS. The unit has been extensively involved in training with Path NC in preparation for NC go live. Unit cohesiveness is our goal and this unit has the flexibility to assist other units to improve the successful outcomes for this agency as a whole. Monthly Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) meeting are conducted onsite, to review agency data, policy updates, and address casework concerns.

Foster Care/Permanency Planning:

At this time, we currently have four vacant positions within the Foster Care Unit and three Foster Care Social Workers. We currently have 71 children in Foster Care being cared for by relatives or foster parents. We continue to have monthly meetings with our assigned RCWC to review updated data policy and agency professionalism, we have monthly staff meetings to ensure we are in compliance with meeting the needs of the families we serve. We will continue to strive to protect and serve all the children in Foster Care also known as Permanency Planning.

Transitional Unit:

The Transitional Unit's Links & 18 to 21 position is vacant. This unit continues to work caseloads while assisting the other Child Welfare units as needed, particularly in the areas of courtesy requests, home studies and monitoring cases from other counties, assisting with supervising visits and transporting children in custody as needed. This Unit continues to assist particularly in the area of making monthly contacts with the children in foster care and assisting in finding placement when disruption occurs and when children come into custody. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) met with staff to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

Adult Services:

The Adult Services unit continues to be fully staffed with the exception of the frozen Guardianship position. This unit continues to serve ages 18 and above, with protective services, guardianship, and special assistance in-home case management as well as many inquiries/outreach situations and completing complaint investigations on Adult Care Homes. Guardianship cases are on the rise. The guardianship cases continue to demand extensive time due to severe and persistent mental illness and the lack of resources for this population.

Work First Employment:

This Unit continues to be fully staffed. The unit is open for in-person applications, telephone interviews continue for Work First applications, recertification's, short-term services and benefits. Certain necessary application documentation can be mailed to individuals that wish to apply and when received back the worker can conduct telephone interviews to complete that application. Workers are able to conduct home visits to complete the interview process when necessary. Some application information is also being provided for pick-up in the foyer area of the agency. Workers are encouraged to make telephone contacts with clients at least every two weeks to offer support and resources to clients and to encourage program participation. The workers will continue helping the foster care unit with transporting and monitoring foster care visits. The agency continues to have monthly meetings with the state reps by conference calls.

Child Day Care:

The Child Day Care unit continues to be fully staffed. The agency has continued to have a waiting list due to funding. As of today, there are about 157 children on the waiting list. The unit is open for in-person applications and telephone interviews, and staff continue to complete Day Care applications and recertification's. The Day Care unit will continue to be monitored by Supervisor to ensure workers are completing cases correctly and documenting appropriately.

Program Integrity:

Program Integrity continues to be fully staffed. Repayments are being collected. Staff continue to work towards cleaning up the backlog, establishing cases and repayment agreements.

Agenda Item #22: FACILITY SERVICES – APPROVAL of the SERVICE AGREEMENT with JOHNSON CONTROLS and CHAMPION SYSTEMS for HVAC SYSTEM and SOFTWARE at 113 COURTHOUSE SQUARE:

Facility Services Director Stuart Carroll requested approval of the following service agreements for HVAC at the courthouse located at 113 Courthouse Square:

- a. Johnson Controls – HVAC Operational Inspections - \$19,230 over 3 years
- b. Champion Systems – HVAC Software and Data Controls - \$9,200 annually

Commissioner Watts - My question is, did any local vendors or contractors try to bid on this project?

Facility Services Director Stuart Carroll – No.

Commissioner Watts - So, no local company submitted a bid?

Facility Services Director Stuart Carroll – No, Sir.

Commissioner Watts - I just wanted to make sure there wasn't any local companies.

Commissioner Bullard - You're saying Johnson Controls will handle HVAC operational inspections for three years?

Facility Service Director Stuart Carroll - Yes, it's a three-year contract. What you're approving tonight is the funding that has already been approved.

Commissioner Bullard - And what will they be doing?

Facility Services Director Stuart Carroll - They basically handle all HVAC-related issues we might encounter. For example, during the issue at the downtown campus, Piedmont was the first to be contacted. They inspected the facility and then brought in this company to perform the actual repairs. In this case, the company will be responsible for managing the HVAC systems, and they employ four or five local technicians. They've also come highly recommended by other organizations.

MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

THE FULL JOHNSON CONTROLS & CHAMPION SYSTEMS SERVICE AGREEMENTS ARE HOUSED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

Agenda Item #23: FACILITY SERVICES – APPROVAL of the SERVICE AGREEMENT with TK ELEVATOR CORPORATION for MAINTENANCE and REPAIRS of ELEVATORS WITHIN 7 COUNTY MAINTAINED BUILDINGS:

Facility Services Director Stuart Carroll requested approval of the service agreement with TK Elevator Corporation for maintenance and repairs of elevators located at 7 different county-maintained buildings in the annual sum of \$32,140.80 and the additional \$1,320 Multimedia Monitoring.

Commissioner Byrd - How do we get credit for that? Is that set up as a retainer or something similar?

Facility Services Director Stuart Carroll - That will be their annual cost. If you proceed with it, it should be in your contract, it's \$50,000. There's a difference if we pay monthly versus paying a lump sum. There's no reduction in the monthly amount, but if we pay it as a lump sum, that's what we typically do.

Commissioner Byrd - If we pay a lump sum, and then have a service call, is that service billed separately and in addition to the \$32,000 for the service contract?

Facility Services Director Stuart Carroll - Sometimes, depending on what the issue is, yes, a service call may be billed separately. But this amount covers multiple locations, as stated. Again, we've used this company before, this isn't new. All of these numbers are already included in the budget.

MOTION:

Commissioner Floyd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

***THE FULL TK ELEVATOR CORPORATION SERVICE AGREEMENT IS HOUSED
IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE***

**Agenda Item #24: FACILITY SERVICES – APPROVAL of the SERVICE
AGREEMENT with AXEL MCPHERSON CONSTRUCTION INC. for FIRE
HYDRANTS:**

Facility Services Director Stuart Carroll requested approval of the service agreement with Axel McPherson Inc. to install two new fire hydrants near the new Sheriff's Office in the amount of \$80,000 to be paid for with SCIF allocation.

MOTION:

Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

***THE FULL AXEL MCPHERSON CONSTRUCTION INC. SERVICE AGREEMENT IS
HOUSED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE***

**Agenda Item #25: FINANCE – APPROVAL of the FIRST READING of the
AMENDED PURCHASING POLICY:**

Finance Director Heather Woody requested approval of the first reading of the amended purchasing policy to include a conflict of interest form.

Finance Director Heather Woody - So, back in January, you all approved the first seven chapters of our revised personnel policy. We recently had a meeting with DEQ, and she suggested including a Conflict of Interest form. That document is still valid.

She also provided the exhibit recommended by the School of Government. I did make one change, I removed the \$250,000 threshold that would apply to any type of grant or project we may be working on.

This document simply states that we have no personal gain in the project, that neither we nor our immediate family (mother, father, spouse, brother, sister) own a business that would benefit. She

recommended this addition because eventually, all of this will need to be uploaded and in compliance.

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairman Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

EXHIBIT A

COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST FOR OVERSIGHT OF CONTRACT CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The [] (“Unit”) has adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy (“Policy”) that governs the Unit’s expenditure of Federal Financial Assistance (as defined in Section II of the Policy). The Policy designates [] as the “COI Point of Contact.” The Policy requires the COI Point of Contact to complete this Compliance Checklist to identify potential real or apparent conflicts of interest in connection with proposed Contracts (as defined in Section II) and file the Checklist in the records of the Unit.

Instructions for Completion

1. The COI Point of Contact shall complete Steps 1 through 5 of the Checklist below.
2. If the value of the proposed Contract exceeds \$[], the COI Point of Contact shall collect a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form from each Covered Individual.
3. If the COI Point of Contact identifies a potential real or apparent conflict of interest after completing this Compliance Checklist, the COI Point of Contact shall report such potential conflict of interest to [] and to each member of the Governing Board.

Definitions.

1. *Covered Individual.* Each person identified in Section 1 of this Checklist is a “Covered Individual” for purposes of this Compliance Checklist and the Policy.
2. *Immediate Family Member* means, with respect to any Covered Individual, (i) a spouse, and parents thereof, (ii) a child, and parent thereof, (iii) a parent, and spouse thereof, (iv) a sibling, and spouse thereof, (v) a grandparent and grandchild, and spouses thereof, (vi) domestic partners and parents thereof, including domestic partners of any individual in (ii) through (v) of this definition; and (vii) any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the Covered Individual is the equivalent of a family relationship.
3. *Related Party* means (i) an Immediate Family Member of a Covered Individual, (ii) a partner of a Covered Individual, or (iii) a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of a Covered Individual, of a partner of a Covered Individual, or of an Immediate Family Member of a Covered Individual.

Step				
1	Identify the proposed Contract, counterparty, and the subject of the Contract.	<u>Name of Contract:</u> <hr/> <u>Name of Counterparty</u> <hr/> <u>Subject of Contract:</u> <hr/>		
2	Identify all individuals involved in the selection, award, or administration of the Contract. These individuals are "Covered Individuals". Ensure that each Covered Individual has been provided with a copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy.			
	<u>Public Officials</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Agents</u>	
3	Identify whether any Covered Individual has a (i) financial or other interest in, or (ii) tangible personal benefit from the firm considered for a Contract. [If the estimated Contract amount exceeds \$[_____], ensure that each Covered Individual files a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form with the COI Point of Contact.]			
Any identified interest in Step 3 is a potential "real" conflict of interest.	<u>Public Officials</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Agents</u>	
4	Identify whether any Related Party has a (i) financial or other interest in or (ii) tangible personal benefit from the firm considered from a Contract. If the estimated Contract amount exceeds \$[_____], ensure that each Covered Individual files a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form with the COI Point of Contact.			
Any identified interest in Step 4 is a potential "real" conflict of interest.	<u>Public Officials – Related Party</u>	<u>Employees – Related Party</u>	<u>Agents – Related Party</u>	
5	Identify whether a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts would find that an existing situation or relationship creates the <i>appearance</i> that a Covered Individual or any			

	Related Party has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a Contract? If yes, explain.		
Any identified interest in Step 5 is a potential “apparent” conflict of interest.	<u>Public Officials</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Agents</u>

COI Point of Contact:

Signature of COI Point of Contact:

Date of Completion:

EXHIBIT B
CONTRACT CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM
FOR OFFICIALS, EMPLOYEES, AND AGENTS

The [] (“Unit”) has adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy (“Policy”) that governs the Unit’s expenditure of Federal Financial Assistance (as defined in Section II of the Policy). The Policy designates [] as the “COI Point of Contact.”

The COI Point of Contact has identified you as an official, employee, or agent of the Unit that may be involved in the selection, award, or administration of the following contract: _____ (the “Contract”). To safeguard the Unit’s expenditure of Federal Financial Assistance, the COI Point of Contact has requested that you identify any potential real or apparent conflicts of interest in the Firm considered for the award of a Contract. Using the Exhibit A to the Policy as a guide, please answer the following questions:

1. Do you have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

2. Will you receive any tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

3. For purposes of Question 3(a) and 3(b), your “Immediate Family Members” include: (i) your spouse and their parents, (ii) your child, (iii) your parent and any spouse of your parent, (iv) your sibling and any spouse of your sibling, (v) your grandparents or grandchildren, and the spouses of each, (vi) any domestic partner of any individual in (ii) through (v) of this definition; and (vii) any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with you is the equivalent of a family relationship.

- a. Do you have an Immediate Family Member with a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

- b. Do you have an Immediate Family Member that will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

4. Do you have any other partner with a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

5. Will any other partner of yours receive any tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

6. Does your current or potential employer (other than the Unit) have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract or will such current or potential employer receive a tangible personal benefit from this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

7. Benefits to Employers

- a. Does a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any of your Immediate Family Members have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

- b. Will a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any of your Immediate Family Members receive a tangible personal benefit from this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

- c. Does a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any partner of yours have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

- d. Will a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any partner of yours receive a tangible personal benefit from this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

8. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that you have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

9. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that any Immediate Family Member of yours has a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

10. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that your current or potential employer (other than the Unit) has a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

11. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that any current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any of your Immediate Family Members has a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

12. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that any current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any other partner has a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Contract or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Contract?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

* * * * *

Sign Name: _____
Print Name: _____
Name of Employer _____
Job Title: _____
Date of Completion: _____

* * * * *

EXHIBIT C
COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST FOR SUBAWARD OVERSIGHT

The [] (“Unit”) has adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy (“Policy”) that governs the Unit’s expenditure of Federal Financial Assistance (as defined in Section II of the Policy). The Policy designates [] as the “COI Point of Contact.” The Policy requires the COI Point of Contact to complete this Compliance Checklist to identify potential real or apparent conflicts of interest in connection with proposed Subawards (as defined in Section II) and file the Checklist in the records of the Unit.

Instructions for Completion

1. The COI Point of Contact shall complete Steps 1 through 5 of the Checklist below.
2. If the value of the proposed Subaward exceeds \$[], the COI Point of Contact shall collect a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form from each Covered Individual.
3. If the COI Point of Contact identifies a potential real or apparent conflict of interest after completing this Compliance Checklist, the COI Point of Contact shall report such potential conflict of interest to [] and to each member of the Governing Board.

Definitions.

1. *Covered Individual.* Each person identified in Section 1 of this Checklist is a “Covered Individual” for purposes of this Compliance Checklist and the Policy.
2. *Immediate Family Member* means, with respect to any Covered Individual, (i) a spouse, and parents thereof, (ii) a child, and parent thereof, (iii) a parent, and spouse thereof, (iv) a sibling, and spouse thereof, (v) a grandparent and grandchild, and spouses thereof, (vi) domestic partners and parents thereof, including domestic partners of any individual in (ii) through (v) of this definition; and (vii) any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the Covered Individual is the equivalent of a family relationship.
3. *Related Party* means (i) an Immediate Family Member of a Covered Individual, (ii) a partner of a Covered Individual, or (iii) a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of a Covered Individual, of a partner of a Covered Individual, or of an Immediate Family Member of a Covered Individual.

Step		
1	Identify the proposed Subaward, Subrecipient, and the subject of the Subaward.	<u>Name of Contract:</u> <u>Name of Counterparty</u> <u>Subject of Subaward:</u>

2	Identify all individuals involved in the selection, award, or administration of the Subaward. These individuals are “Covered Individuals”. Ensure that each Covered Individual has been provided with a copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy.		
	<u>Public Officials</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Agents</u>
3	Identify whether any Covered Individual has a (i) financial or other interest in, or (ii) tangible personal benefit from the firm considered for a Subaward. [If the estimated Subaward amount exceeds \$[_____], ensure that each Covered Individual files a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form with the COI Point of Contact.]		
Any identified interest in Step 3 is a potential “real” conflict of interest.	<u>Public Officials</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Agents</u>
4	Identify whether any Related Party has a (i) financial or other interest in or (ii) tangible personal benefit from the firm considered from a Subaward. If the estimated Subaward amount exceeds \$[_____], ensure that each Covered Individual files a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form with the COI Point of Contact.]		
Any identified interest in Step 4 is a potential “real” conflict of interest.	<u>Public Officials – Related Party</u>	<u>Employees – Related Party</u>	<u>Agents – Related Party</u>
5	Identify whether a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts would find that an existing situation or relationship creates the <i>appearance</i> that a Covered Individual or any Related Party has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a Subaward? If yes, explain.		
Any identified interest in Step 5 is a potential “apparent” conflict of interest.	<u>Public Officials</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Agents</u>

COI Point of Contact:

Signature of COI Point of Contact:
Date of Completion:

EXHIBIT D
SUBAWARD CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM
FOR OFFICIALS, EMPLOYEES, AND AGENTS

The [_____] (“Unit”) has adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy (“Policy”) that governs the Unit’s expenditure of Federal Financial Assistance (as defined in Section II of the Policy). The Policy designates [_____] as the COI Point of Contact.

The COI Point of Contact has identified you as an official, employee, or agent of the Unit that may be involved in the selection, award, or administration of the following subaward: _____ (the “Subaward”). To safeguard the Unit’s expenditure of Federal Financial Assistance, the COI Point of Contact has requested that you identify any potential real or apparent conflicts of interest in the Firm considered for the award of a Subaward. Using the Exhibit A to the Policy as a guide, please answer the following questions:

1. Do you have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

2. Will you receive any tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

3. For purposes of Question 3(a) and 3(b), your “Immediate Family Members” include: (i) your spouse and their parents, (ii) your child, (iii) your parent and any spouse of your parent, (iv) your sibling and any spouse of your sibling, (v) your grandparents or grandchildren, and the spouses of each, (vi) any domestic partner of any individual in (ii) through (v) of this definition; and (vii) any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with you is the equivalent of a family relationship.

- a. Do you have an Immediate Family Member with a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

- b. Do you have an Immediate Family Member that will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

4. Do you have any other partner with a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

5. Will any other partner of yours receive any tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

6. Does your current or potential employer (other than the Unit) have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward or will such current or potential employer receive a tangible personal benefit from this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

7. Benefits to Employers

- a. Does a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any of your Immediate Family Members have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

- b. Will a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any of your Immediate Family Members receive a tangible personal benefit from this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

- c. Does a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any partner of yours have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

- d. Will a current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any partner of yours receive a tangible personal benefit from this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

8. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that you have a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

9. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that any Immediate Family Member of yours has a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

10. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that your current or potential employer (other than the Unit) has a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

11. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that any current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any of your Immediate Family Members has a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

12. Does any existing situation or relationship create the appearance that any current or potential employer (other than the Unit) of any other partner has a financial or other interest in a firm considered for this Subaward or will receive a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for this Subaward?

Yes _____ No _____ Unsure: _____

If the answer is Yes or Unsure, please explain:

* * * * *

Sign Name: _____
Print Name: _____
Name of Employer _____
Job Title: _____
Date of Completion: _____

* * * * *

Agenda Item #26: FINANCE – APPROVAL of BUDGET AMENDMENTS, PROJECT ORDINANCES, DEPARTMENTAL REQUISITIONS and PURCHASES:

Finance Director Heather Woody requested approval of the following budget amendments, project ordinances, departmental requisitions and purchases:

- a. Administration & Personnel/Laptop Purchase - \$0
- b. Finance – Collections Center Temp Worker - \$0
- c. Teen Court – Professional Services - \$0
- d. Economic Development – Professional Services - \$0
- e. Health Dept – Public Health Infrastructure Additional Funding - \$30,931
- f. Central Garage – Geotab Services - \$20,910
- g. Recreation – Insurance Payment for Damage - \$7,705
- h. Veterans Services – Continue Usage of Grant - \$9,314
- i. Amended Ordinance for Columbus County Schools - \$0
- j. Close Out Grant Ordinance Aging HHI Grant to correct fund number – (\$51,464)
- k. Reissue Grant Ordinance Aging HHI Grant under correct fund number - \$51,464
- l. Departmental Requisitions
- m. Departmental Purchases needing PO's

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve A-M, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

THE FULL PRINTOUT OF ALL OF THE ABOVE REQUESTS ARE HOUSED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE

Agenda Item #27: APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/REPLACEMENTS:

Staff requested appointments, re-appointments or replacements to the following boards, committees and councils.

Legend: EB = Entire Board
Listed Zone # = Individual Commissioner

Zone I:	Barbara Featherson	Zone V:	Brent Watts
Zone II:	Chris Smith	Zone VI:	Ricky Bullard
Zone III:	Giles E. Byrd	Zone VII:	Scott Floyd
Zone IV:	Lavern Coleman		

COMMITTEE	ZONE/EB	PERSON(S)	EXP. DATE	BOARD ACTION
Southeast Economic Development Commission	EB	Lisa Nye (resigned)	04/01/2028 4 year term	Appoint Stuart Hayes

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to appoint Stuart Hayes to fill the position previously held by Lisa Nye. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Byrd and passed unanimously.

ADD-ON

Agenda Item #27-A: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – PURCHASING AGREEING for ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

County Manager Eddie Madden requested approval of the purchase agreement for economic development.

County Manager Eddie Madden stated that the Board had authorized him to enter into negotiations for 64 acres. After seven weeks of discussions, he was pleased to announce that an agreement had been successfully reached with the default property owner.

The contract specifies that the County will proceed to close on the property. The purchase will be funded using Article 44 sales tax revenue, which will be returned to the General Fund. The budgeted purchase price is \$700,000, equating to approximately \$11,000 per acre.

The property offers access to Future I-74, water, natural gas, high-speed internet, and energy infrastructure. The County intends to use this site for economic development purposes, with the goal of creating jobs and supporting broader economic growth.

Commissioner Bullard - I'd like to say that I'm proud we've gained ownership of that property. It's a prime location for development. In the past, I believed it was a mistake for the property to be sold for the purpose it was, rather than being used as originally intended. I'm now looking forward to the opportunities and progress this site can bring to Columbus County.

MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

****COPY OF THE FULL PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH CAROLINA BERRY GROUP IS HOUSED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE****

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V.

At 7:54 P.M., A motion was made by Commissioner Bullard and seconded by Commissioner Watts to recess regular session and enter into Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #28: APPROVAL of WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V COMBINATION MINUTES:

a. June 16, 2025 Regular Session

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #29: WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV, and V – APPROVAL of the CONTRACT EXTENSION for ON-CALL ENGINEERS with GREEN ENGINEERING, WITHERS RAVENEL, and MS CONSULTANTS:

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested approval of the contract extension for on-call engineers with Green Engineering, Withers Ravenel, and MS Consultants.

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairman Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

**SUGGESTED FORM OF
TASK ORDER AMENDED**

This is an Amendment to Task Order No. One (1), consisting of 3 pages.

Task Order

In accordance with Paragraph 1.01 of the Agreement Between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services – Task Order Edition, dated June 20, 2025 ("Agreement"), Owner and Engineer agree as follows:

1. Background Data

- a. Effective Date of Amended Task Order:
- b. Owner: Columbus County
- c. Engineer: Green Engineering, PLLC
- d. Specific Project (title): On-Call Services (FTSE's, Plan Review, Capacity Questions and General Engineering and Land Surveying Projects)
- e. Specific Project (description): Provide general Professional Engineering and Land Surveying Consulting Services as requested by Columbus County for their infrastructure needs.

2. Services of Engineer

Green Engineering, PLLC will provide Engineering Services as requested to assist Columbus County with their infrastructure needs. The services identified under this Task Order are not specific to a particular Capital Project, but general Civil Engineering and Land Surveying services related to the day-to-day systems operations and planning activities required in the development of Capital Projects. Once a particular project is identified a separate Task Order will be established for that project and will identify detailed services to be provided.

3. Owner's Responsibilities

Owner shall have those responsibilities set forth in Article 2 of the Agreement and in Exhibit B, subject to the following:

4. Payments to Engineer

A. Owner shall pay Engineer for services rendered under this Task Order as follows:

Description of Service	Amount	Basis of Compensation
1. Basic Services (Part 1 of Exhibit A)		
a. Professional Civil Engineer (Principal)	\$230.00	Hourly
b. Project Manager (PE)	\$180.00	Hourly
c. Project Engineer (PE)	\$170.00	Hourly
d. CADD Operator / GIS Technician	\$95.00	Hourly
e. Surveyor (PLS)	\$130.00	Hourly
f. Surveyor (Non-PLS)	\$125.00	Hourly
g. Survey Crew (1-Man)	\$105.00	Hourly
h. Survey Crew (2-Man)	\$150.00	Hourly
i. Senior Administrative Assistant	\$100.00	Hourly

B. The terms of payment are set forth in Article 4 of the Agreement and in the applicable governing provisions of Exhibit C.

5. Consultants retained as of the Effective Date of the Task Order:

6. Other Modifications to Agreement and Exhibits: N/A

7. Attachments: N/A

8. Other Documents Incorporated by Reference:

Exhibit K – Amendment to Task Order

EJCDC® E-505, Agreement Between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services – Task Order Edition.
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and American Society of Civil Engineers. All rights reserved.

Page 2

9. Terms and Conditions

Execution of this Task Order by Owner and Engineer shall make it subject to the terms and conditions of the Agreement (as modified above), which Agreement is incorporated by this reference. Engineer is authorized to begin performance upon its receipt of a copy of this Task Order signed by Owner.

The Effective Date of this Task Order is June 20, 2025.

OWNER: Columbus County

By: _____

Print Name: Edwin H. Madden, Jr.

Title: County Manager

ENGINEER: Green Engineering, PLLC

By: E. Leo Green

Print Name: E. Leo Green, III, P.E.

Title: Managing Member

Engineer License or Firm's
Certificate No. (if required): P-0115
State of: North Carolina

DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE FOR TASK ORDER:

Name: Gail E. Edwards

Title: Assistant County Manager

Address: 127 W. Webster Street,
Whiteville, North Carolina 28472

E-Mail
Address: gedwards@columbusco.org

Phone: 910-640-6630

DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE FOR TASK ORDER:

Name: E. Leo Green, III

Title: Managing Member

Address: 303 Goldsboro Street E.,
Wilson North Carolina 27893

E-Mail
Address: elg3@greeneng.com

Phone: 252-237-5365

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Agenda Item #30: WATER and SEWER DISTRICT II – APPROVAL of the AMENDED CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE to CLOSEOUT the DEQ-DWI PLANNING GRANT:

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested approval of the Amended Capital Project Ordinance to Closeout the DEQ-DWI Planning Grant. This grant was used for funding engineer and consultant services in WDII.

MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Featherson. The motion unanimously passed.

COLUMBUS COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
Ordinance making appropriations to close out the WDII DEQ-DWI
Planning Grant Capital Project Fund

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County, North Carolina as follows:

Section 1: The following revised amounts are hereby made to close out the DEQ-DWI Planning Grant Capital Project pursuant to G.S. 159 -13.2.

Source of Revenue		Current Budget	Changes	New Budget
035-3620-436020	DEQ-DWI PLANNING GRANT	\$ 400,000.00	\$ (17,664.00)	\$ 382,336.00
Total Estimated Revenues		\$ 400,000.00	\$ (17,664.00)	\$ 382,336.00
Project Appropriations				
035-7142-519001	DEQ-DWI PLANNING GRANT	\$ 390,000.00	\$ (16,914.00)	\$ 373,086.00
035-7142-548001	DEQ-DWI PLANNING GRANT	\$ 10,000.00	\$ (750.00)	\$ 9,250.00
Total Project Appropriations		\$ 400,000.00	\$ (17,664.00)	\$ 382,336.00

Section 2: The project undertaken pursuant to this ordinance is in accordance with the Recommended Budget and any changes made during the County Commissioners' budget work sessions.

\$ 300,000
\$ 28,008,079
\$ 2,000,000
<u>\$ 1,110,260</u>

Total Estimated Revenues – Tabor City Pre-K thru 8 School Construction \$ 31,418,339

Section 3: The Finance Director is hereby directed to maintain within the Capital Project Fund sufficient detailed accounting records to satisfy all applicable regulations. The terms of any financing agreement also shall be met.

89-5923-519902	Eng/Architect Fees	\$ 1,468,702
89-5923-519903	Appraisal & Survey	\$ 10,000
89-5923-519940	Permitting	\$ 197,400
89-5923-524000	Construction	\$ 25,850,000
89-5923-548002	Administrative Cost	\$ 145,000
89-5923-549956	Contingency	\$ 1,568,141
89-5923-551010	Furniture Fixtures & Equipment	\$ 1,494,096
89-5923-820000	Construction Interest	<u>\$ 685,000</u>
Total Project Appropriations – Tabor City Pre-K thru 8 School Construction		<u>\$ 31,418,339</u>

Section 4: The County desires to expend its own funds for the purpose of paying certain costs of various projects, for which expenditures the County reasonably expects to reimburse itself from the proceeds of debt to be incurred by the County.

Section 5: All expenditures relating to obtaining any bond referendum and or installment purchase will be reimbursed from bond proceeds and installment purchase proceeds in accordance with the requirements of the United States Treasury Regulations Section 1.150 -2.

Section 6: This declaration of official intent is made pursuant to Section 1.150-2 of the Treasury Regulations to expressly declare the official intent of the County to reimburse itself from the proceeds of debt to be hereinafter incurred by the County for certain expenditures paid by the County on or after the date which is sixty (60) days prior to the date hereof.

Section 7: The County intends to seek Federal, State, and/or other grant funding to reduce the amount of loan proceeds. The adoption of this ordinance authorizes the County Manager and/or his representative to apply for and accept such funding if awarded.

Section 8: This project ordinance shall be entered in the minutes of the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County. Within five days hereof, copies of this ordinance shall be filed with the finance office in Columbus County, and with the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County. Copies of the Capital Project Ordinance shall be made available to the Budget Officer, the Project Manager, and the Finance Officer for direction in carrying out this project.

This Amended Capital Project close out shall become effective on July 21st, 2025.
ADOPTED, this 21st day of July, 2025

Agenda Item #31: WATER and SEWER DISTRICT IV – APPROVAL of the AMENDED CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE for the CLOSEOUT of the LAKELAND VILLAGE WATER LINE EXTENSION PROJECT:

Harold Nobles requested approval of the amended capital project ordinance to closeout the Lakeland Village Water Line Extension Project.

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

COLUMBUS COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
Ordinance making appropriations to close out the WDIV Lakeland
Village Water Line Extension Capital Project Fund

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County, North Carolina as follows:

Section 1: The following revised amounts are hereby made to close out the WDIV Lakeland Village Water Line Extension School Construction Capital Project pursuant to G.S. 159 -13.2.

Source of Revenue		Current Budget	Changes	New Budget
052-3506-432330	DEQ Grant Revenues	\$ 772,198	\$ (108,502)	\$ 663,696
Total Estimated Revenues		\$ 772,198	\$ (108,502)	\$ 663,696
Project Appropriations				
052-7138-519905	Engineering	\$ 207,263	\$ -	\$ 207,263
052-7138-558001	Construction	\$ 533,935	\$ (77,502)	\$ 456,433
052-7138-599100	Contingency	\$ 31,000	\$ (31,000)	\$ -
Total Project Appropriations		\$ 772,198	\$ (108,502)	\$ 663,696

Section 2: The project undertaken pursuant to this ordinance is in accordance with the Recommended Budget and any changes made during the County Commissioners' budget work sessions.

\$ 300,000	
\$ 28,008,079	
\$ 2,000,000	
<u>\$ 1,110,260</u>	

Total Estimated Revenues – Tabor City Pre-K thru 8 School Construction \$ 31,418,339

Section 3: The Finance Director is hereby directed to maintain within the Capital Project Fund sufficient accounting records to satisfy all applicable regulations. The terms of any financing agreement also shall be met.

89-5923-519902 Eng/Architect Fees	\$ 1,468,702
89-5923-519903 Appraisal & Survey	\$ 10,000
89-5923-519940 Permitting	\$ 197,400
89-5923-524000 Construction	\$ 25,850,000
89-5923-548002 Administrative Cost	\$ 145,000
89-5923-549956 Contingency	\$ 1,568,141
89-5923-551010 Furniture Fixtures & Equipment	\$ 1,494,096
89-5923-820000 Construction Interest	<u>\$ 685,000</u>

Total Project Appropriations – Tabor City Pre-K thru 8 School Construction \$ 31,418,339

Section 5: All expenditures relating to obtaining any bond referendum and or installment purchase will be reimbursed from bond proceeds and installment purchase proceeds in accordance with the requirements of the United States Treasury Regulations Section 1.150 -2.

Section 6: This declaration of official intent is made pursuant to Section 1.150-2 of the Treasury Regulations to expressly declare the official intent of the County to reimburse itself from the proceeds of debt to be hereinafter incurred by the County for certain expenditures paid by the County on or after the date which is sixty (60) days prior to the date hereof.

Section 7: The County intends to seek Federal, State, and/or other grant funding to reduce the amount of loan proceeds. The adoption of this ordinance authorizes the County Manager and/or his representative to apply for and accept such funding if awarded.

Section 8: This project ordinance shall be entered in the minutes of the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County. Within five days hereof, copies of this ordinance shall be filed with the finance office in Columbus County, and with the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County. Copies of the Capital Project Ordinance shall be made available to the Budget Officer, the Project Manager, and the Finance Officer for direction in carrying out this project.

This Amended Capital Project close out shall become effective on July 21st, 2025.
ADOPTED, this 21st day of July, 2025

ADJOURN COMBINATION MEETING of Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V BOARD MEETING.

MOTION:

At 7:47 P.M., Vice Chairman Smith made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #32: COMMENTS:

A. Board of Commissioners

Vice Chairman Smith- No Comments.

Commissioner Floyd – No Comments.

Commissioner Featherson - No Comments.

Commissioner Watts - First, I want to emphasize again how proud I am of the new ordinance regarding protests at schools. This is something I strongly advocated for. I believe it's a great step forward for the safety and well-being of our students and our school system. I want to sincerely thank our legal department and everyone who played a role in bringing this forward, it means a lot to me, and I appreciate it.

Secondly, I'd like to highlight something exciting happening in our community. As of tonight, we still have two ball teams from Columbus County competing in the World Series, one of them remains undefeated. They've been playing since Friday, and it's now Monday, so that's a great achievement. They might just bring home some trophies this weekend. We're proud of all our teams, and it's wonderful to see Columbus County represented so well.

And lastly, I want to take a moment to recognize Braxton Byrd, a Boy Scout who is here with us tonight. Thank you for being present and involved in your community.

Commissioner Byrd - I'm proud of my grandson.

Commissioner Watts - I believe he's working toward earning a merit badge, and I think we should do what we can to help him get started on that path. Let's support him and help him succeed.

Commissioner Byrd – Stand up, Braxton. Well, I believe it's required to attend a public meeting for one of the merit badges, is that right, Braxton? Did this help you with that? I'm really glad to see you here. He's working hard to earn his Eagle Scout and just got back from camp. He told me he's already completed the hard ones, so now he's working on the easier ones!

Chairman Coleman - Congratulations, Braxton. I wish you the very best, son.

Commissioner Watts - The reason I recognized him is because of his beautiful achievement.

Commissioner Bullard - He came to a Commissioners' meeting and represented himself exceptionally well.

Commissioner Byrd - And that's my other grandson Hayden Byrd sitting with him, I'm very proud of him as well.

Commissioner Watts - And I have one more thing to say to Mr. Edge. He's already left, but I want him to know this: he goes to every meeting complaining about what we're not doing. I go to the county store, I'm active in the community where he lives, and I talk to the people, but I've never seen him there. So, it bothers me when he wants to tell me what to do when I don't even see him in the community. That's all I have to say.

Commissioner Bullard – I'd also like to say I'm proudly involved with our softball teams. I even went up to Charlotte to watch Columbus County teams play. We had four teams competing, and the last two were both from Columbus, so we represented very well.

Today, I was at Southeastern Community College's retreat, held at the Boys Home. It's inspiring to see how Southeastern Community College is working with the Boys Home to help kids who don't want to be there at first, but they're changing their lives by offering workforce programs in partnership with the schools. Hearing some of their stories was truly heart-touching.

We have a community college doing great things that many of us don't even realize, it's a real diamond.

I'm a county citizen through and through, and I'm proud to have been here all my life. Sometimes I smell like dirt because I'm an old farm boy, but I know what I want to see for

Columbus County. I've got family, close, immediate, and extended, and friends all over the county. We look out for each other.

Even though I might sit quietly and listen a lot, that's just my style. I know what I support and what I don't. I do support economic development, and I often say: do whatever it takes to bring it to Columbus County. But I don't support all development. Brick and mortar alone isn't what makes a county a desirable place to live.

This past week, I was in Wilmington for my brother-in-law's funeral. He lived in a huge housing development, with houses just 15 feet apart. That's what he wanted, but it's not for me. There were probably a thousand homes in that development. I drove through it, and it's what I'm hearing some want to build here in Columbus, very nice retirement communities, but not for me. I understand not everyone wants that.

There are certain types of development that put the county taxpayers and residents first, that's how I was raised. People who want to move here, that's good, it's a good place to be. But I also work with folks from Brunswick and Wilmington, and they complain about traffic congestion overflowing into Brunswick and New Hanover counties.

I love this county, and I believe all the commissioners here do too. We're all on the same track. Like Commissioner Watts said, I'm very active, I run several businesses, I have many visitors, I'm at ball games two or three times a week, I'm at church, and I'm at commissioners' meetings. I don't miss many.

This is the job I asked for, and I do my best to represent everyone in the county, whether in District 6 or the East End, I'm still the commissioner for all.

Thank you all for standing up for what you believe is right, and for always listening.

Commissioner Watts - Oh, and this is something dear to my heart, I almost forgot. July is Parks and Recreation Month. Since we've been talking about our ball teams, I think it's important that we recognize our County Parks and Recreation Department. That's a big deal, and I've preached and preached about the importance of it. I want to make sure we show our appreciation and thank our County Parks and Recreation staff for the great work they do for our community.

Chairman Coleman - I agree with you. I appreciate you bringing that up because I was going to mention it myself. Our Parks and Recreation staff are truly the unsung heroes in this county.

Commissioner Watts - Today, I saw members of the Parks and Recreation staff out mowing grass in this extreme heat. I want to sincerely thank them for their hard work and dedication, it means a lot.

Commissioner Byrd - It's been a full month since we last met, and as you can see from tonight's agenda, we had a lot to cover. It took time to read through and understand all the items, and I recognize it might have been confusing to the public, especially with all the amendments we

approved. I want to clarify that much of what was passed tonight had already been budgeted; this was largely about the process of allocating those funds.

A few things I'd like to bring up:

1. Abandoned and Neglected Properties:

Is Dylan still here? I believe we need to revisit the ordinance regarding dilapidated or neglected buildings. Currently, when we send a first notice of violation, it automatically grants a 60-day window. If there's no action, we send another letter, and that's another 60 days, and it goes on. I'd like us to consider reducing the initial notice period to 30 days so we can act more promptly. There are several eyesores in the county that need attention, some next to businesses doing their best to maintain their properties, yet they're bordered by abandoned homes with trees growing through them. We need to do better.

2. Vaping and Unregulated Substances:

Mr. Madden, I've spoken before about my concerns with vaping. Recently, I had a young man working with me who is on Suboxone but says he prefers a substance called "Kratom," which he buys from vape shops. He told me, "I'd rather use this than prescription meds because it's legal, and I won't get in trouble." It's troubling that products like this are so accessible and so lightly taxed, less than groceries, in fact.

We need to lobby our legislators to apply a higher sales tax on these substances. Vaping and products like Kratom are taking the place of tobacco, which once supported family farms and local businesses. Now, the public ends up footing the bill when these substances lead people to treatment centers, as we've seen in our discussions tonight about opioid settlement funding.

3. Recognizing Youth Achievement:

To little man working toward his Eagle Scout badge, I'm proud of you. I wanted to be an Eagle Scout myself when I was your age, but I didn't follow through. So keep pushing. It's a great accomplishment, and you've already come a long way.

4. Future Agenda Request:

Finally, I'd like to get the ordinance update, specifically reducing the violation notice period from 60 days to 30 days, added to the next meeting agenda. I have more to discuss, but given how long this meeting has run, I'll hold the rest until next time.

Chairman Coleman - I'd also like to take a moment to recognize the outstanding efforts of our local Dixie Youth sports programs here in Columbus County. For a county of our size and population, our teams continue to compete against much larger and often better-funded programs, and they hold their own. That's something to be very proud of.

In addition, I want to recognize the East Columbus High School FFA Parliamentary Procedure Team. They recently won the state championship, a huge accomplishment, especially considering they competed against schools across the state. They'll now advance to the National FFA Championship in Indiana. Some folks may not immediately recognize how impressive this

is, but it's a significant achievement that deserves recognition. Our small schools and our students have a lot of heart, and they continue to do great things.

Sometimes, the challenges we face make us frustrated, even at each other. But even in disagreement, I believe we're still a community, and I still want to stand beside you. We've got to look out for each other and work together.

I also want to echo what Commissioner Bullard said earlier, I'm in the community. If someone contacts me, I return their call. I'm open and accessible, and anyone who wants to talk can get my number from just about anyone. If I miss a call, I'll call you back. I take my responsibility to serve this county seriously.

Finally, to our county staff, thank you. I appreciate your hard work, dedication, and the heart and soul you put into keeping Columbus County running. We couldn't do any of this without you.

B. County Manager Eddie Madden – Reported:

- **Tax Bills & Discount Period:**

The Assessor's Office will mail out tax bills this Thursday. The discount period for early payment begins August 1 and will be in effect for 30 days.

- **911 Center Update:**

Construction at the 911 Center has been ongoing for several months and is now in the final stages. One of the final steps involves converting the building's power supply to connect to the new generator system.

- As a result, the Administration Office will close at 3:00 p.m. this Friday to allow the contractor to begin work early Saturday morning.
- This temporary power shutdown will not affect the Collections Center, so residents may still make water or tax payments Friday afternoon.

- **Air Conditioning Repair:**

The Administration Building has been without air conditioning for several days. The necessary part arrived today and is scheduled for installation first thing tomorrow morning. If all goes as expected, cooling will be restored, which will be a welcome relief for staff amid the recent extreme heat.

- **Audit Process:**

The Finance Department is actively working with the County's audit firm to provide all necessary financial documentation. We remain on schedule to complete the audit within the required timeframe later this year.

- **Employee Loss – Aaron Shipman:**

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Mr. Aaron Shipman, who began work with Columbus County on July 21.

- After completing orientation and onboarding paperwork, Mr. Shipman reported to the Detention Center, where he suffered a fatal medical emergency on his first day.
- Because Mr. Shipman had not yet met eligibility requirements for life insurance, his family is now faced with funeral costs without benefit coverage.

- The Sheriff's Office is collecting donations to support Mr. Shipman's family. County staff, Board members, and members of the public are encouraged to contribute.
- We extend our sincere condolences to the Shipman family during this unexpected and difficult time.

Chairman Coleman concluded the meeting by asking, *"Are all hearts and minds clear?"*

Agenda Item #23: ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:14 P.M., Vice Chairman Smith made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

JANA NEALEY, Clerk to the Board

LAVERN COLEMAN, Chairman