

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Monday, May 5, 2025

6:00 – 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 Commissioners Chamber, 127 West Webster Street, Whiteville, North Carolina 28472, for the purpose of conducting the Regular Session.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

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 6:00 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

MOTION:

Commissioner Featherson 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.

RECESS CLOSED SESSION and enter into REGULAR SESSION

MOTION:

At 6:20 P.M. Commissioner Floyd made a motion to recess closed session and enter into regular session, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

GENERAL ACCOUNT:

Attorney Amanda Prince gave the general account as follow:

County Commissioners discussed a possible settlement regarding the opioid litigation. No action was taken by the board.

MOTION:

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

Chairman Coleman recessed regular session until 6:30 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 Commissioner Featherson. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, which was led by Commissioner Watts.

Agenda Item # 5: APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve the agenda, with an add-on naming the Columbus Regional Airport Terminal Building after Brenden H. Jones to the agenda as 14A. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

The add-on will be listed as Agenda Item #14-A

Agenda Item # 6: BOARD MINUTES APPROVAL:

a. April 21, 2025 Regular Session

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Smith made a motion to approve the Board Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #7: PUBLIC INPUT:

Attorney Prince – Mr. Chairman, if I may read the rules:

The board shall allow public comment. The maximum amount of time set aside for public comment shall be 30 minutes, regardless of whether a topic is on the agenda. Anyone wishing to speak shall complete an index card supplied by the county, providing their name, address, and telephone number. They shall identify the topic they wish to address and indicate whether the topic is on or not on the agenda, including all pertinent information. These cards are to be presented to the county clerk or county attorney, who will assign each card a number in the order in which it is received.

When the board reaches the public comment portion of the meeting, the chairman will recognize those wishing to speak in numerical order as shown on the cards. Individuals who are recognized will come to the podium, state their name and address, and will then be allowed three minutes to present their comments. The county attorney will keep time for that period.

A person may only speak once during the public comment period. There shall be no yielding of time or allowance for one speaker to utilize another's time when addressing the board of commissioners. Speakers must address their own concerns or the concerns of the general public as a whole.

Only an attorney who represents an individual may address the board of commissioners about a specific problem of that individual.

The board is not required to comment on matters brought up during the public comment portion of the meeting and may decline to take action on a request presented during this time. Such requests may instead be referred to the county administrator, county attorney, or another appropriate individual for investigation and action or for a future report back to the board.

Proper order will be maintained at all times during the meeting. This means no harassing language directed at county employees, among other considerations.

Mr. Johnny Edge - I reside at 470 Happy Home Road in Nakina, North Carolina.

I would like to express my concerns regarding the recent changes to the meeting agenda. It appears that the order was altered, and I feel this adjustment may have been made to limit public access to my comments. During my three-minute speaking time, I was called to order multiple times, which I believe was handled improperly.

I have consulted with several individuals, including legal counsel, and it seems that the situation was not managed appropriately. I am also perplexed as to why city managers are required to undergo a public hearing to be heard by the commissioners. Are commissioners fully informed about all significant decisions being made in the county?

There appears to be a communication gap between the public and our governing body. Why can't we have open public meetings where residents can engage with commissioners directly, fostering better relationships? Perhaps commissioners could hold meetings in each of the seven districts to enhance public trust and confidence.

A community thrives on strong leadership and the support of its residents. We stand at a crossroads where Columbus County has the potential to become a destination where people want to live, raise families, and where our children and grandchildren can remain.

This vision can only be realized if we work together, the governing body and the people of Columbus County. Currently, I am collaborating with three major developers and require accurate information to present to them about why they should invest in Columbus County. There are many intelligent business people here with valuable ideas, and I believe we are failing to facilitate communication between them and the commissioners.

I would like to see these ideas welcomed and at least discussed. I love this county and am committed to doing everything I can to make Columbus County a better place to live.

Thank you for your time, and may God bless you.

Agenda Item #8: PROCLAMATION – ADOPTION of the 1ST ANNUAL COLUMBUS COUNTY RAMPS AND RAILS APPRECIATION MONTH PROCLAMATION:

Governing Body is requesting adoption of the 1st Annual Columbus County Ramps and Rails Appreciation Month Proclamation.

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to table Agenda Item #8 until the next meeting, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item # 9: PROCLAMATION – CHILD CARE PROVIDER APPRECIATION:

Selena Rowell from the Columbus County Partnership for Children is requesting adoption of the proclamation for May 9th as Child Care Appreciation Day.

Selena Rowell - Good evening commissioners and everyone in attendance. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for considering the recognition of our childcare providers, the professionals who are building the foundation for our future leaders and perhaps even future county commissioners.

Educating and nurturing these young minds ensures they grow into productive citizens, whether they remain in Columbus County or venture elsewhere in the world.

Currently, there are 34 licensed childcare facilities in Columbus County. I recall a time when that number was nearly double. However, we've experienced transitions that have led to a decline in the childcare industry. Despite these challenges, this group of professionals remains vital. They care for our children while we are at work, providing a safe and nurturing environment. In light of this, I am requesting a proclamation to honor these dedicated individuals. National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day is observed on the Friday before Mother's Day, which falls on May 9 this year. Next week, the Columbus County Partnership for Children will host an event to honor our local family childcare homes and licensed childcare facilities. I invite each of you to attend this event, which will be held at 6:30 PM next Thursday at the Church at Northwood. This will be an opportunity to recognize and appreciate the men and women who work tirelessly to prepare the next generation for success in various aspects of life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

MOTION:

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



WHEREAS, Child Care Aware® of America, the Columbus County Partnership for Children (Smart Start) and other organizations nationwide are recognizing Child Care Providers on this day; and

WHEREAS, child care has provided a safe, nurturing place for the enrichment and development of millions of children nationwide and is a vital force in our economy; and

WHEREAS, the pandemic illuminated how indispensable child care providers are for the well-being and economic security of Columbus County, young children, families, and communities; and

WHEREAS, child care programs, which are mostly small businesses, run and staffed predominantly by women, continue to recover from the health and financial hardships stemming from the pandemic to meet the needs of more families; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina and the Smart Start network recognizes that child care has been and continues to be a lifeline for families, communities, and the economy. As such, it has provided much-needed support to providers to help sustain the viability of child care by funding wage supplements, subsidized child care, and providing quality enhancement support; and

WHEREAS, the future depends on the quality of the early childhood experiences provided to young children today; support for high-quality child care represents a worthy commitment to our children's future; and

Now, therefore, We, the Columbus County Board of Commissioners, hereby proclaim May 9th 2025, as Provider Appreciation Day and urge all citizens to recognize child care providers for their important work, and how valuable they are for our communities.

APPROVED and ADOPTED this the 5th day of May, 2025.

Agenda Item #10: EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

County Manager Eddie Madden recognized Brian Riggins from Solid Waste as the Employee Spotlight.

This evening, we have the pleasure of recognizing Mr. Brian Riggins from the Solid Waste Department, who is present here as our Employee Spotlight honoree. He was nominated by Mr. Harold Nobles, the Director of Public Utilities, who is also in attendance.

Brian serves as a Solid Waste Truck Driver for the Columbus County Solid Waste Department. He is directly responsible for duties including the collection and transportation of solid waste materials from the Columbus County Recycling Centers to the Columbus County Transfer Station. He works diligently to ensure that these materials are properly disposed of. He addresses citizens' concerns regarding waste collection and disposal, maintains logs of daily routes, collected materials, and any incidents that occur, and reports any mechanical issues or needed repairs to his supervisor.

He performs daily pre-trip inspections on the trucks and other equipment. His willingness to learn and assist his co-workers is outstanding. Brian is very efficient in completing his daily tasks and always wears a smile on his face.

According to his supervisor, Mr. Nobles, "I don't know of anyone else more deserving of this award this evening than Brian. His skills in the field are exemplary, and he takes pride in what he does. Brian is adaptable, creative, and dependable. He is always eager to help his co-workers and the department as a whole. His willingness to support others is impeccable."

For these and many other reasons, we proudly recognize Mr. Brian Riggins as tonight's Employee Spotlight.

Agenda Item #11: PRESENTATION – MIKE UNRUE from FOUNDATION FORWARD will CONDUCT a PRESENTATION REGARDING the CHARTERS of FREEDOM PROGRAM:

Mike Unrue from Foundation Forward presented information about their Charters of Freedom program.

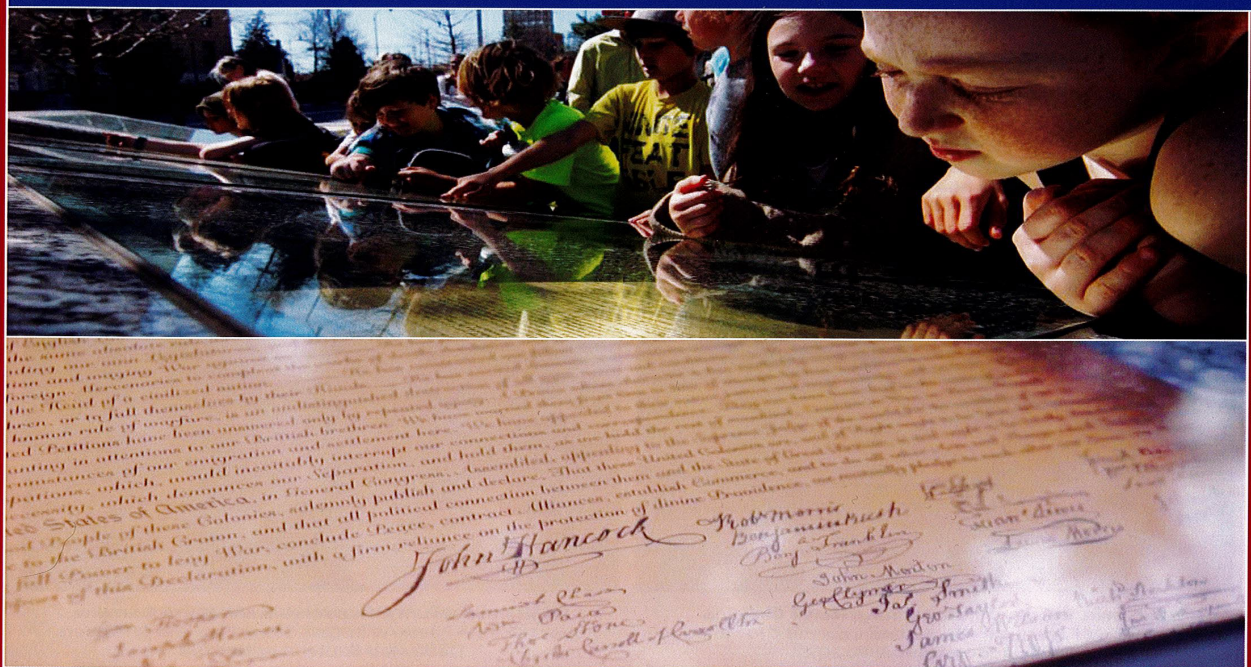
MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve proceeding with the placement of the Charters of Freedom in the county, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.



THE CHARTERS OF FREEDOM

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE ★ UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION ★ BILL OF RIGHTS



Foundation Forward, Inc.

An Educational, Nonprofit, 501(c)(3) Organization

Agenda Item #12: ADMINISTRATION- DISUCSSION and APPROVAL for MUNICIPAL TAX COLLECTION:

County Manager Eddie Madden - County Manager Eddie Madden requested discussion of the recommendations regarding municipal tax collections.

Mr. Chairman, members of the board, thank you for allowing me to address the board regarding the municipal tax collection system under consideration this evening.

The issue of municipal tax collections has been a topic of concern over the past several months. It has been highlighted by our auditors in the annual audit and is a regular subject of discussion in our finance and tax office.

The current rate of \$3 per account has been in place in some municipalities for as much as 30 years without adjustment. We are currently losing money performing these duties on behalf of the municipalities. In some cases, we're spending more on postage and materials than we actually collect from certain towns.

Additionally, our auditor revealed that the county has been absorbing the 2% discount that municipalities offer. Some municipalities offer this discount, while others do not. For those that do, we have been absorbing that cost. This is a software issue that needs to be rectified and will be addressed.

This situation has also led to complications with our financial software and audit processes. For instance, we collect property taxes for the City of Whiteville, including their downtown business district and stormwater program. These are three different rates assessed to property owners within the city, and we collect these on behalf of the city. This is a heavy lift for our staff and requires significant effort each year to properly account for, bill, and collect these taxes.

At the last meeting, the board officially canceled any prior agreements. That was a step in the process, not the end result. It was the first step. It canceled prior agreements and contracts that were in place, and then you all asked me to negotiate a fairer system, a fairer rate with the municipalities to ensure that we at least covered our costs.

Since then, we've met with the majority of the towns across the county. Most want to remain in our program and are willing to sign new agreements, while others are exploring alternatives. We have provided you with two written counterproposals, one from the City of Whiteville and one from Tabor City. These are in your board packet, labeled as exhibits, and I hope you've had a chance to review them. These proposals are based on a flat rate, similar to the system we have had up to this point, but instead of \$3, they propose \$6 per account, plus a higher percentage rate for delinquent accounts collected by the county.

After carefully considering these proposals and reviewing them thoroughly, we are of the opinion that the best and most straightforward solution for the county is to set a rate based on a percentage of taxes collected, including delinquent accounts. Whatever rate this board chooses would apply to all accounts, whether current or delinquent. This method is not new; it is utilized across the state by many counties that collect on behalf of municipalities.

The board approved a collection rate back in January of 4%. We received a lot of feedback from the municipalities on that percentage rate. You also asked me to meet with them and negotiate an acceptable rate with each of them. Let me just say we have met with and insisted on meeting with the individual towns and town managers rather than in a group setting because we contract individually with those towns.

We have provided you with rate sheets that give you options 2%, 2.5%, 3%, and 4%. We certainly will follow the wishes of this board when it comes to whatever rate you decide to assess.

Our recommendation, based on discussions with the municipalities, is to set the rate at 2.5% as an initial rate for all accounts. If you refer to your sheet, you will see that this would generate approximately \$136,000 in revenue to the county to cover its expenses. But that's predicated on the fact that each of the municipalities would contract with us. We've been made aware that some may choose to handle it internally, which would reduce that number depending on the size of the municipality.

One thing I have stressed in my meetings with each of them, and I will stress it here this evening, is that this is a voluntary program. We're not mandating that the municipalities contract with us. We're not mandated to collect on their behalf. It is a mutual agreement between both parties, and it is not imposed upon anyone. They have a board of commissioners or a town board that will decide individually whether they want to continue to contract with us or not. Some may choose to build their own system and collect their own taxes, and that is certainly fine with us.

We are also suggesting that the agreements with the towns be revisited periodically. I would suggest that in this first year, we go back to a discussion with them next year to see if it's working as we have predicted.

We would certainly ask that any town that does not want to continue with us provide us adequate notice, as we have done here most recently.

It is imperative, however, that we get some direction from you on this rate and how you plan to proceed forward, because our tax office will be beginning the billing cycle very soon, and there are software and billing changes that need to occur if the board is going to change its format.

Again, we have made a recommendation of 2.5%. We've received good feedback from the majority of the municipalities. The only exceptions have been Whiteville and Tabor City, which have provided you with separate proposals for your consideration.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

Commissioner Bullard – What do the surrounding counties charge to offer these services?

County Manager Eddie Madden - Some of our staff gathered comparisons; I know that Robeson County and Bladen County both charge a 3% fee. Other counties handle it differently, but several across the state have set their rate at 3%.

Commissioner Bullard - Well, you know Bladen and Robeson do too.

County Manager Eddie Madden – Yes, Sir.

Commissioner Bullard - How long have they been doing that?

County Manager Eddie Madden - I'm not sure about that; I'll need to find out and get back to you.

Based on my experience working with a municipality in Bladen County, the county previously billed and collected taxes separately for my town. However, it appears that the towns have since transitioned to having the county collect taxes on their behalf. In Robeson County, this arrangement has been in place for some time. Therefore, I don't believe a 3% fee is unusual. My thought was that if we set our fee at 2.5%, it would cover our costs and be lower than what some neighboring counties charge, potentially making it more acceptable to our municipal partners

Commissioner Byrd - After conducting considerable research, I found that many of these same municipalities have had contracts with private contractors charging 8% to 9% on delinquent taxes. These fees are separate from, and in addition to, what the county has been charging. In my view, if we're going to set a rate, it would only be fair to align with our neighboring counties. This board often asks, 'What are the other counties doing?'

So, with that in mind, I intend to make a motion to set the rate at 3%. Under this rate, we would be handling everything, collecting current taxes, delinquent taxes, and in some cases, even utility payments like water. Keep in mind, mailing alone costs about 42 cents per piece.

I believe we would be taking a risk by setting a rate we only think will allow us to break even, because there are always unforeseen expenses. Therefore, I move that we follow the example of our neighboring counties Bladen and Robeson, and set the rate at 3%.

Vice Chairman Smith - My understanding is that a 2.5% rate applies only if all the municipalities contract with us at that rate.

County Manager Eddie Madden- If all the municipalities sign on with us at 2.5%, it would generate approximately \$138,000. That's assuming full participation. If larger accounts, such as the City of Whiteville or the Town of Tabor, choose to proceed independently, that number would decrease significantly. The percentage is calculated based on each individual account. Accordingly, our costs would decrease proportionately if some towns choose not to participate.

Commissioner Byrd – And our revenue would come down.

Commissioner Floyd - It's the same scenario, even if you went with 3%, it would still come down if they didn't participate.

County Manager Eddie Madden - Yes, sir. It would.

Commissioner Featherson - Do you know the other county's tax rate compared to ours?

County Manager Eddie Madden - I think Bladen's is fairly comparable to ours. I'm not sure about Robeson. Their tax base is much higher, but so is their population. That's a very good question. We can verify that for you. I believe at 2.5%, we would still be under what some of the neighboring counties are at. I know there's a motion on the floor for 3%, but at 2.5%, we'd still be below some of them.

Commissioner Byrd - We've been losing around \$100,000 a year, is that correct, Ms. Woody?

County Manager Eddie Madden – For at least 30 years.

Commissioner Byrd - And no one has come to us and said, 'We know you're doing it a whole lot cheaper than we can.' They can't collect it at 3%. Tabor City and Whiteville can't afford the software, and they'd likely have to hire an additional employee to do it at that rate. And my motion is still on the floor.

Commissioner Bullard - It's hard to run a business and know exactly what it costs, and I'll second that motion.

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve the tax collection rate at 3%, which was seconded by Commissioner Bullard. Chairman Coleman then called for a roll call vote, directing the request to Madam Attorney Prince.

A roll-call vote was taken with the following results:

AYES: Commissioner Featherson, Vice Chairman Smith, Chairman Coleman, Commissioner Byrd, and Commissioner Bullard;
and **NAYS:** Commissioner Floyd, and Commissioners Watts.

The motion passed by a vote of 5-2.

Agenda Item #13: APPROVAL OF ESTABLISH a BUDGET WORKSHOP on MAY 19TH, 2025:

Manager Eddie Madden requested approval to establish a budget workshop for the commissioners on Monday, May 19th, 2025, at 4:00 P.M.- 5:30 P.M.

MOTION:

After discussion, Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #14: AIRPORT – ACCEPTANCE of the DIVISION of AVIATION BLOCK GRANT and APPROVAL of GRANT AGREEMENT:

Airport Director Phil Edwards requested acceptance of the Division of Aviation Block Grant in the amount of \$21,914, and approval of the grant agreement for design of the AWOS system. The associated Capital Project Ordinance was approved during the 4/21/2025 meeting.

MOTION:

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

*****A COPY OF THE FULL GRANT AGREEMENT IS HOUSED IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE***

ADD- ON Agenda Item #14-A: AIRPORT – The RENAMING OF THE COLUMBUS REGIONAL AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDING:

The Airport Authority requested approval to rename the Columbus Regional Airport Terminal Building as ‘The Brenden H. Jones Terminal Building’. Airport Director Philip Edwards will be available to answer any questions.

MOTION:

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

Agenda Item #15: EMERGENCY SERVICES – APPROVAL of COASTAL ARCHITECTURE as the VENDOR FOR THE LOCAL SHELTER CAPABILITY-BUILDING PROJECT:

Interim Emergency Services Director Kay Stephens requested approval of Coastal Architecture as the vendor to complete the Local Shelter Capability-Building Project. This is grant funded.

We have previously been awarded two state grants for the Local Shelter Capability Building Project. This particular grant funding is designated to enhance the architectural designs and to purchase and install automatic transfer switches at five of our school locations. These schools serve as emergency shelters during disasters.

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was advertised, and a committee was appointed to review the submissions. The committee convened on April 21st and thoroughly evaluated the qualifications of three vendors. Following their review, the committee voted to award the project to Coastal Agriculture as a turnkey solution. Coastal Agriculture will collaborate closely with our maintenance department and Columbus County Schools to ensure the project progresses and is completed efficiently.

This initiative aligns with the objectives outlined in the 2024 Capacity Building Competitive Grant Program (CBCG) administered by North Carolina Emergency Management, which aims to enhance local emergency management capabilities and close preparedness gaps.

MOTION:

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

Columbus County

EMERGENCY SERVICES

TELEPHONE
(910) 640-6610



130 W. COLUMBUS ST
WHITEVILLE, NC 28472

April 25, 2025

To: Board of Commissioners
From: Kay Stephens
Date: April 25, 2025

Subject: Request for Approval of Vendor Selection for Local Shelter Capability-Building Project

Overview:

On Monday, April 21, 2025, a review committee convened to evaluate three Request for Qualifications (RFQ) submittals for the Local Shelter Capability-Building project. The committee comprised Stuart Carroll, Facility Services Director; Heather Woody, Finance Director; and Teresa Smith, Emergency Services, Deputy Director. The project aims to enhance architectural designs at five school locations designated as emergency shelters during disasters, as well as to procure and install Automatic Transfer Switches at as many shelter locations as grant funding permits.

Vendor Evaluation:

After a thorough review, all three vendor submissions met the project expectations. The evaluation criteria included:

- Relevant experience
- Notable past projects for reference
- Historical interactions with Columbus County

Based on these criteria, the committee ranked the vendors accordingly.

Recommendation:

Following our assessment, the committee voted to award the project to **Coastal Architecture** as a turn-key solution. Coastal Architecture has a proven track record with Columbus County, demonstrating reliability in completing projects on time and within budget. They will collaborate closely with Stuart Carroll and a representative from Columbus County Schools throughout the project's execution.

Request for Approval:

Agenda Item #16: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – APPROVAL of the LOW BID from GRAKA BUILDERS INC. for the TABOR CITY SHELL BUILDING PROJECT:

EDC/Planning Director Gary Lanier requested approval of low bid from Graka Builders Inc., in the amount of \$1,302,735, for construction of the Tabor City Shell Building.

This project was put out for bid, and a bid tabulation was conducted. I believe there were four bidders. From my perspective, it is commendable that a local builder submitted the lowest bid for this project. Notably, the bid came in approximately \$300,000 below our initial estimate, which is always a positive outcome when staying under budget.

The Tabor City Town Council has approved accepting the low bid and moving forward with signing the construction contract. As you know, this is a jointly owned building, similar to our incubator building in the Tabor City Industrial Park. The land is already jointly owned by Columbus County and the Town of Tabor City. The Tabor City Town Council has authorized proceeding with the low bid and executing the construction contract.

We would like the county commissioners to have the same opportunity to approve the low bidder and authorize the signature on the contract. Once the building is constructed, it will be situated on land jointly owned by Columbus County and the Town of Tabor City, making it a permanent fixture.

We are eager to proceed. The site work has been completed for approximately two months, and we are ready to commence vertical construction.

Commissioner Byrd - Mr. Chairman, I move to approve the contract, contingent upon our attorney's review and approval.

Attorney Prince - I've reviewed the contract and observed that the only parties listed are Tabor City and the construction company. This omission should be corrected to accurately reflect all involved parties.

Should you wish, once I have incorporated the necessary changes, I can circulate the revised contract to all commissioners to obtain a consensus, ensuring that everyone is in agreement before proceeding.

Commissioner Bullard – My motion still stands.

MOTION:

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve the low bids and contract, pending the recommended changes from County Attorney Prince be included, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

THE **ADAMS COMPANY** INC.

ENGINEERING AND DESIGN

Firm License No. C-4438

708 Abner Phillips Road | Warsaw, NC 28398 | (910) 293-2770

MEMO

To: Josh Ward, Town Manager

From: Joshua E. Outlaw, PE

Subject: Recommendation of Award
Tabor City Shell Building

Date: April 2, 2025

On April 1, 2025 at 2:00 pm bids were received at the Tabor City Town Hall. The Bids were opened and read aloud. Attached is the Bid Tabulation Summary and a Notice of Award.

The contractor is not on a federal or state debarred list and is a licensed corporation in the state of NC; therefore, they are eligible to perform the work.

Based on the information on the Bid Tabulation Summary, it is recommended that the Town award the Shell Building contract to the lowest responsible bidder, Graka Builders, Inc at the bid price of \$1,302,735.00.

Please present this to the Town Council and upon Council approval sign the Notice of Award and forward me the original.

In addition to approving the award, please have the Board make a motion to allow the Mayor to sign and approve change orders and other contract documents going forward.

Town of Tabor City -- Shell Building

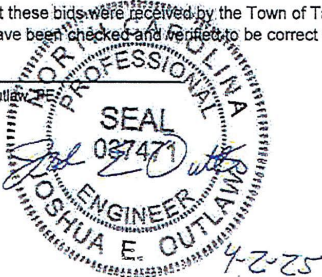
Bid Tabulation Detail

4/1/2025

Item	Description	Unit	Quantity	Apex Construction Group, LLC		DPH General Contractors, Inc		Driven Contractors, LLC		Graka Builders, Inc	
				Unit Price	Amount	Unit Price	Amount	Unit Price	Amount	Unit Price	Amount
SITE WORK											
1	Rough Grade Earthwork	LS	1	184,031.00	184,031.00	\$ 59,000.00	59,000.00	\$ 162,500.00	162,500.00	\$ 41,800.00	41,800.00
2	Concrete Driveway Turnout	SY	135	175.00	23,625.00	\$ 182.00	24,570.00	\$ 55.00	7,425.00	\$ 153.00	20,655.00
3	Loading Dock	LS	1	58,128.00	58,128.00	\$ 36,000.00	36,000.00	\$ 5,500.00	5,500.00	\$ 18,817.00	18,817.00
4	Fine Grading and topsoil backfill	LS	1	18,150.00	18,150.00	\$ 18,500.00	18,500.00	\$ 14,200.00	14,200.00	\$ 6,820.00	6,820.00
5	Erosion Control	LS	1	41,608.00	41,608.00	\$ 11,250.00	11,250.00	\$ 45,850.00	45,850.00	\$ 8,250.00	8,250.00
6	ABC for driveway and parking areas	SY	4,000	24.50	98,000.00	39.10	156,400.00	35.00	140,000.00	13.50	54,000.00
7	15" Storm Drain Pipe	LF	370	50.00	18,500.00	34.00	12,580.00	100.00	37,000.00	36.50	13,505.00
8	Drain Inlet w/ Grate	EA	10	4,850.00	48,500.00	5,000.00	50,000.00	6,625.00	66,250.00	3,850.00	38,500.00
9	Seeding and Mulching	AC	2	3,750.00	7,500.00	7,200.00	14,400.00	5,000.00	10,000.00	5,280.00	10,560.00
BUILDING											
10	25,000 sf PEMB	LS	1	704,330.00	704,330.00	767,000.00	767,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	836,756.00	836,756.00
11	Foundation Concrete	CY	240	575.00	138,000.00	825.00	198,000.00	600.00	144,000.00	358.00	85,920.00
12	Gravel Floor	SY	2,780	17.50	48,650.00	20.00	55,600.00	30.00	83,400.00	18.50	51,430.00
13	Electrical	LS	1	34,650.00	34,650.00	52,500.00	52,500.00	50,000.00	50,000.00	31,350.00	31,350.00
14	Transom Windows	EA	24	3,000.00	72,000.00	2,250.00	54,000.00	2,000.00	48,000.00	2,335.00	56,040.00
OTHER											
15	Insurance and Mobilization	LS	1	89,154.00	89,154.00	177,000.00	177,000.00	80,000.00	80,000.00	28,332.00	28,332.00
Total Project Bid -					1,584,826.00		1,686,800.00		1,894,125.00		1,302,735.00

I certify that these bids were received by the Town of Tabor City at 2:00 pm on April 1, 2025.
The bids have been checked and verified to be correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Joshua E. Outlaw, PE



Agenda Item #17: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – APPROVAL of the PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT with WINDSOR COMMERCIAL for the LOGISTICS PARKWAY EXTENSION PROJECT as PART of the IDF GRANT:

EDC/Planning Director Gary Lanier requested approval of a Professional Services Agreement with Windsor Commercial to provide grant management for the Logistics Parkway Extension Project as part of the IDF Grant. This is funded with the IDF grant allocation.

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, the only correction I would make is to clarify that Windsor Commercial is being contracted to provide project management services.

We’re putting sewer line extensions in the ground, water line extensions, and we're laying down ABCD stone compacted to DOT standards, then paving it. All of that is part of the project, and we need a construction management company to oversee the various vendors and suppliers performing the work.

Windsor Management is the same company that built the first building and later added on to it. They also purchased Lot Number Two, with plans to build a 250,000-square-foot building there, expandable to 450,000 square feet.

They have a vested interest in ensuring the work is done properly. So, we need a project management firm to oversee everything. Out of a \$1.56 million project, this would be approximately \$43,000 for project management services.

MOTION:

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



Professional Services Agreement

Owner

Name:	Columbus County	Contact:	Gary Lanier
Address:	127 W. Webster St.	Phone:	910-640-6608
	Whiteville, NC 28472		
Email:	glanier@columbusco.org		

Consultant

Name:	Windsor Contracting	Contact:	Daniel Granzyk
Address:	1007 Battleground Ave. St. 301	Phone:	336-500-1979
	Greensboro, NC 27408		
Email:	dgranzyk@windsorcommercial.us		

Windsor proposes to provide consulting services to the Columbus County Economic Development Commission during the design and bid process for the Logistics Parkway extension project in Leland, NC as part of the “IDF” Grant. In addition to preconstruction services, Windsor will assist with management of subcontractors throughout the course of construction.

PM Fee..... \$40,564.00

Scope of Work:

- 1. Assist Hanover Design in producing bid package and bid form
- 2. Subcontractor bid solicitation
 - a) Distribute RFPs & bid documents to subcontractors as required
 - b) Assist with RFIs from contractors as they arise
- 3. Qualify subcontractor bids.
 - a) Confirm subcontractor proposals include all work as shown on drawings by Hanover Design
- 4. Manage construction process
 - a) Coordinate weekly / bi-weekly meetings
- 5. Track construction progress
 - a) Produce construction schedule
 - b) Provide updates, reports, and pictures on construction progress

Agenda Item #18: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – ACCEPTANCE of the ONENC GRANT and APPROVAL of the GRANT AGREEMENT for BARRIER FENCING:

EDC/Planning Director Gary Lanier requested acceptance of the OneNC Grant in the amount of \$275,000, and the grant agreement associated.

The INC grant is the Governor's Discretionary Fund grant, which was offered to support barrier fencing if the company were to locate in Chadbourn, specifically in the former WE Bailey building. To proceed, we must formally accept both the grant and the associated agreement.

This grant is contingent upon job creation. Under the terms of the INC grant, the company can apply for 25% of the funds after creating 25% of the promised jobs. Typically, companies submit documentation quarterly as jobs are created, though some may wait until all jobs are established before applying for the full amount.

For us to administer this grant, the board must approve accepting the grant from the state and authorize us to proceed with the necessary agreements.

MOTION:

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

Agenda Item #19: FINANCE – APPROVAL of the FINANCE REPORT for MARCH 2025, BUDGET AMENDMENTS, and PROJECT ORDINANCES:

Finance Director Heather Woody requested approval of the following Finance Report for March 2025 Budget Amendment and Project Ordinances:

- a. Finance Report March 2025
- b. Budget Amendment – Medical Examiner
- c. Budget Amendment – Health Services – Supplies Reimbursement Duplin Co.
- d. Project Ordinance – SCIF Grant 20165
- e. Project Ordinance – EMS Tier II Grant

MOTION:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve items A-E, seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.

				AUDITED	ACTUAL YTD				
FY 24/25	ACTUAL YTD	BALANCE	% COLLECTED	FY 23/24	TOTALS AS	% COLLECTED	DIFFERENCE OF	DIFFERENCE OF	DIFFERENCE OF %
BUDGET	TOTALS	REMAINING	YTD	BUDGET	OF 3/31/2024	YTD	BUDGETS	YTD TOTALS	COLLECTED YTD
43,161,806	33,375,860	9,785,946	77.33%	35,430,668	31,944,796	90.2%	\$ 7,731,138	\$ 1,431,063	-12.83%
125,000	69,026	55,974	55.22%	105,000	66,830	63.6%	\$ 20,000	\$ 2,196	-8.43%
14,255,878	8,501,234	5,754,644	59.63%	14,158,521	8,334,398	58.9%	\$ 97,357	\$ 166,836	0.77%
37,675	2,793	34,882	7.41%	37,058	3,297	8.9%	\$ 617	\$ (503)	-1.48%
77,477	57,596	19,881	74.34%	77,477	58,025	74.9%	\$ -	\$ (429)	-0.55%
588	588	0	99.98%	33,120	32,845	99.2%	\$ (32,532)	\$ (32,257)	0.81%
449,540	438,320	11,220	97.50%	716,360	542,852	75.8%	\$ (266,820)	\$ (104,532)	21.72%
1,997,497	940,474	1,057,023	47.08%	1,950,536	640,756	32.9%	\$ 46,961	\$ 299,718	14.23%
615,000	441,860	173,140	71.85%	463,386	262,796	56.7%	\$ 151,614	\$ 179,064	15.13%
66,166	102,126	(35,960)	154.35%	75,000	7,279	9.7%	\$ (8,834)	\$ 94,847	144.64%
34,000	7,932	26,068	23.33%	-	2,158	0.0%	\$ 34,000	\$ 5,775	23.33%
700,000	552,815	147,185	78.97%	600,000	406,916	67.8%	\$ 100,000	\$ 145,899	11.15%
47,500	9,985	37,515	21.02%	30,000	26,669	88.9%	\$ 17,500	\$ (16,684)	-67.88%
471,000	307,499	163,501	65.29%	533,400	399,090	74.8%	\$ (62,400)	\$ (91,591)	-9.53%
20,600	19,615	985	95.22%	12,600	8,481	67.3%	\$ 8,000	\$ 11,134	27.91%
3,000	1,820	1,180	60.67%	5,200	4,647	89.4%	\$ (2,200)	\$ (2,827)	-28.70%
32,350	2,844	29,506	8.79%	30,800	6,577	21.4%	\$ 1,550	\$ (3,733)	-12.56%
1,832,020	971,050	860,970	53.00%	1,733,735	1,063,595	61.3%	\$ 98,285	\$ (92,545)	-8.34%
3,553,370	2,234,913	1,318,457	62.90%	3,886,112	2,209,459	56.9%	\$ (332,742)	\$ 25,454	6.04%
7,996,435	4,541,500	3,454,935	56.79%	7,194,622	4,287,394	59.6%	\$ 801,813	\$ 254,106	-2.80%
2,273	2,273	0	99.99%	2,000	2,174	108.7%	\$ 273	\$ 99	-8.71%
21,000	12,986	8,014	61.84%	21,000	14,106	67.2%	\$ -	\$ (1,120)	-5.33%
167,037	135,289	31,748	80.99%	171,436	124,109	72.4%	\$ (4,399)	\$ 11,180	8.60%
45,825	20,300	25,525	44.30%	31,600	19,530	61.8%	\$ 14,225	\$ 771	-17.50%
-	-	-	0.00%	630,000	-	0.0%	\$ (630,000)	\$ -	0.00%
2,591,604	2,116,935	474,669	81.68%	2,545,762	2,059,197	80.9%	\$ 45,842	\$ 57,738	0.80%
707,829	698,529	9,300	98.69%	1,292,072	-	0.0%	\$ (584,243)	\$ 698,529	98.69%
6,407,042	171,253	6,235,789	2.67%	13,369,064	-	0.0%	\$ (6,962,022)	\$ 171,253	2.67%
85,419,512	55,737,415	29,682,097	65.25%	85,136,529	52,527,977	50.10%	\$ 282,983	\$ 3,209,438	15.15%

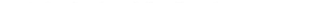

FY 24/25 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS	BALANCE REMAINING	% Expended YTD	AUDITED FY 23/24 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2024	% COLLECTED YTD	DIFFERENCE OF BUDGETS	DIFFERENCE OF YTD TOTALS	DIFFERENCE OF % COLLECTED YTD
262,705	193,909	68,796	73.8%	273,512	195,159	71.4%	\$ (10,807)	\$ (1,250)	2.5%
585,271	370,945	214,326	63.4%	1,260,492	1,149,553	91.2%	\$ (675,221)	\$ (778,608)	-27.8%
267,549	180,230	87,319	67.4%	591,907	532,729	90.0%	\$ (324,358)	\$ (352,499)	-22.6%
897,707	731,220	166,487	81.5%	1,138,324	527,656	46.4%	\$ (240,617)	\$ 203,564	35.1%
1,786,704	1,148,172	638,533	64.3%	1,741,735	1,259,502	72.3%	\$ 44,969	\$ (111,330)	-8.1%
428,734	431,307	(2,573)	100.6%	600,685	598,775	99.7%	\$ (171,951)	\$ (167,468)	0.9%
77,477	50,481	26,996	65.2%	77,477	49,908	64.4%	\$ -	\$ 573	0.7%
430,710	335,187	95,523	77.8%	505,331	315,267	62.4%	\$ (74,621)	\$ 19,921	15.4%
644,663	456,501	188,162	70.8%	610,259	432,498	70.9%	\$ 34,404	\$ 24,003	-0.1%
560,547	416,516	144,031	74.3%	656,211	473,338	72.1%	\$ (95,664)	\$ (56,821)	2.2%
1,613,826	1,231,490	382,336	76.3%	-	-	0.0%	\$ 1,613,826	\$ 1,231,490	76.3%
598,480	433,926	164,554	72.5%	493,564	372,431	75.5%	\$ 104,916	\$ 61,495	-3.0%
241,875	176,739	65,136	73.1%	250,104	162,958	65.2%	\$ (8,229)	\$ 13,781	7.9%
2,143,709	1,354,647	789,062	63.2%	2,249,465	1,345,584	59.8%	\$ (105,756)	\$ 9,063	3.4%
10,926,841	7,905,544	3,021,297	72.3%	12,269,996	7,886,720	64.3%	\$ (1,343,155)	\$ 18,824	8.1%
263,620	210,131	53,490	79.7%	131,772	95,725	72.6%	\$ 131,848	\$ 114,406	7.1%
5,184,766	3,621,386	1,563,380	69.8%	5,593,786	3,707,886	66.3%	\$ (409,020)	\$ (86,500)	3.6%
31,000	22,650	8,350	73.1%	31,250	22,525	72.1%	\$ (250)	\$ 125	1.0%
774,465	546,482	227,983	70.6%	4,371,674	2,573,241	58.9%	\$ (3,597,209)	\$ (2,026,759)	11.7%
219,918	151,050	68,868	68.7%	-	-	0.0%	\$ 219,918	\$ 151,050	68.7%
30,000	29,600	400	98.7%	55,000	29,550	53.7%	\$ (25,000)	\$ 50	44.9%
637,686	435,144	202,542	68.2%	703,548	488,842	69.5%	\$ (65,862)	\$ (53,698)	-1.2%
2,767,440	1,876,247	891,193	67.8%	-	-	0.0%	\$ 2,767,440	\$ 1,876,247	67.8%
1,375,904	1,039,707	336,197	75.6%	-	-	0.0%	\$ 1,375,904	\$ 1,039,707	75.6%
649,648	329,062	320,586	50.7%	667,979	474,667	71.1%	\$ (18,331)	\$ (145,605)	-20.4%
501,167	373,632	127,535	74.6%	453,365	308,593	68.1%	\$ 47,802	\$ 65,039	6.5%
383,053	272,291	110,762	71.1%	444,873	304,147	68.4%	\$ (61,820)	\$ (31,855)	2.7%
673,412	596,439	76,973	88.6%	593,414	334,285	56.3%	\$ 79,998	\$ 262,153	32.2%
337,714	250,028	87,686	74.0%	335,976	237,597	70.7%	\$ 1,738	\$ 12,431	3.3%
3,082,721	2,293,221	789,500	74.4%	3,004,481	1,992,475	66.3%	\$ 78,240	\$ 300,746	8.1%
6,645,475	3,662,916	2,982,559	55.1%	6,940,925	3,732,494	53.8%	\$ (295,450)	\$ (69,578)	1.3%
10,169,469	6,656,387	3,513,082	65.5%	9,740,550	6,787,229	69.7%	\$ 428,919	\$ (130,842)	-4.2%
3,697,024	2,131,158	1,565,866	57.6%	3,725,309	2,296,385	61.6%	\$ (28,285)	\$ (165,227)	-4.0%
172,563	129,818	42,745	75.2%	173,428	125,704	72.5%	\$ (865)	\$ 4,114	2.7%
17,056,693	12,785,649	4,271,044	75.0%	16,883,491	11,472,927	68.0%	\$ 173,202	\$ 1,312,721	7.0%
1,511,529	1,104,137	407,392	73.0%	1,644,632	1,155,203	70.2%	\$ (133,103)	\$ (51,066)	2.8%
477,162	319,022	158,140	66.9%	546,175	348,141	63.7%	\$ (69,013)	\$ (29,120)	3.1%
687,704	252,887	434,817	36.8%	931,363	612,448	65.8%	\$ (243,659)	\$ (359,561)	-29.0%
6,622,581	823,674	5,798,907	12.4%	5,444,476	-	0.0%	\$ 1,178,105	\$ 823,674	12.4%
85,419,512	55,329,530	30,089,982	64.8%	85,136,529	52,402,142	43.6%	\$ 282,983	\$ 2,927,388	21.2%
-	407,885				125,835				

FY 24/25 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS	BALANCE REMAINING	% COLLECTED YTD	AUDITED FY 23/24 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2024	% COLLECTED YTD	DIFFERENCE OF BUDGETS	DIFFERENCE OF YTD TOTALS	DIFFERENCE OF % COLLECTED YTD
2,318,493	1,751,003	567,490	75.5%	2,333,209	1,793,251	76.9%	\$ (14,716.00)	\$ (42,247.65)	-1.3%
2,318,493	1,670,765	647,728	72.1%	2,333,209	1,696,094	72.7%	\$ (14,716.00)	\$ (25,328.56)	-0.6%
	80,238			-	97,157				
FY 24/25 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS	BALANCE REMAINING	% COLLECTED YTD	AUDITED FY 23/24 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2024	% COLLECTED YTD	DIFFERENCE OF BUDGETS	DIFFERENCE OF YTD TOTALS	DIFFERENCE OF % COLLECTED YTD
1,662,332	574,747	1,087,585	34.6%	1,309,186	565,751	43.2%	\$ 353,146.00	\$ 8,995.42	-8.6%
1,662,332	731,297	931,035	44.0%	1,309,186	750,376	57.3%	\$ 353,146.00	\$ (19,078.13)	-13.3%
	(156,551)			-	(184,624)				
FY 24/25 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS	BALANCE REMAINING	% COLLECTED YTD	AUDITED FY 23/24 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2024	% COLLECTED YTD	DIFFERENCE OF BUDGETS	DIFFERENCE OF YTD TOTALS	DIFFERENCE OF % COLLECTED YTD
7,026,329	1,840,135	5,186,194	26.2%	32,642,244	222,469	0.7%	\$ (25,615,915.00)	\$ 1,617,666.00	25.5%
7,026,329	1,840,135	5,186,194	26.2%	32,642,244	997,625	3.1%	\$ (25,615,915.00)	\$ 842,510.04	23.1%
FY 24/25 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS	BALANCE REMAINING	% COLLECTED YTD	AUDITED FY 23/24 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2024	% COLLECTED YTD	DIFFERENCE OF BUDGETS	DIFFERENCE OF YTD TOTALS	DIFFERENCE OF % COLLECTED YTD
890,600	719,133	171,467	80.7%	871,210	656,192	75.3%	\$ 19,390.00	\$ 62,940.92	5.4%
1,484,761	1,050,523	434,238	70.8%	1,456,143	1,018,564	69.9%	\$ 28,618.00	\$ 31,959.56	0.8%
820,724	597,277	223,447	72.8%	783,165	574,072	73.3%	\$ 37,559.00	\$ 23,204.86	-0.5%
1,420,082	749,699	670,383	52.8%	927,325	698,043	75.3%	\$ 492,757.00	\$ 51,656.71	-22.5%
882,571	744,880	137,691	84.4%	1,124,292	810,761	72.1%	\$ (241,721.00)	\$ (65,880.72)	12.3%
5,498,738	3,861,512	1,637,226	N/A	5,162,135	3,757,631	N/A	\$ 336,603.00	\$ 103,881.33	N/A
890,600	553,834	336,766	62.2%	871,210	353,650	40.6%	\$ 19,390.00	\$ 200,184.70	21.6%
1,484,761	734,547	750,214	49.5%	1,456,143	447,831	30.8%	\$ 28,618.00	\$ 286,715.96	18.7%
820,724	494,560	326,164	60.3%	783,165	274,706	35.1%	\$ 37,559.00	\$ 219,854.33	25.2%
1,420,082	769,097	650,985	54.2%	927,325	324,987	35.0%	\$ 492,757.00	\$ 444,110.59	19.1%
882,571	420,583	461,988	47.7%	1,124,292	315,257	28.0%	\$ (241,721.00)	\$ 105,325.24	19.6%
5,498,738	2,972,622	2,526,116	N/A	5,162,135	1,716,431	N/A	\$ 336,603.00	\$ 1,256,190.82	N/A
FY 24/25 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS	BALANCE REMAINING	% COLLECTED YTD	AUDITED FY 23/24 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2024	% COLLECTED YTD	DIFFERENCE OF BUDGETS	DIFFERENCE OF YTD TOTALS	DIFFERENCE OF % COLLECTED YTD
7,026,329	5,222,988	1,803,341	74.3%	6,750,052	5,115,467	75.8%	\$ 276,277.00	\$ 107,520.95	-1.4%
7,026,329	3,977,562	3,048,767	56.6%	6,750,052	3,567,372	52.8%	\$ 276,277.00	\$ 410,189.66	3.8%
	1,245,426			-	1,548,095				
FY 24/25 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS	BALANCE REMAINING	% COLLECTED YTD	AUDITED FY 23/24 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2024	% COLLECTED YTD	DIFFERENCE OF BUDGETS	DIFFERENCE OF YTD TOTALS	DIFFERENCE OF % COLLECTED YTD
2,072,807	2,075,950	(3,143)	100.2%	2,295,702	1,965,432	85.6%	\$ (222,895.00)	\$ 110,518.43	14.5%
2,072,807	1,934,554	138,253	93.3%	2,295,702	1,842,391	80.3%	\$ (222,895.00)	\$ 92,162.88	13.1%
	141,396			-	123,041				
FY 24/25 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS	BALANCE REMAINING	% COLLECTED YTD	AUDITED FY 23/24 BUDGET	ACTUAL YTD TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2024	% COLLECTED YTD	DIFFERENCE OF BUDGETS	DIFFERENCE OF YTD TOTALS	DIFFERENCE OF % COLLECTED YTD
859,754	706,978	152,776	82.2%	851,090	751,313	88.3%	\$ 8,664	\$ (44,335)	-6.0%
859,754	577,675	282,079	67.2%	851,090	853,336	100.3%	\$ 8,664	\$ (275,661)	-33.1%
	129,303			-	(102,023)				
TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2025				CASH & INVESTMENTS		TOTALS AS OF 3/31/2024			
				<u>Cash:</u>					
2,231,048				Central Depository - Truist		9,277,770			
36,782,711				Central Depository - NCCMT		32,800,936			
				Water Districts - \$8,732,633					
				Solid Waste - \$9,622,408					
39,013,759						42,078,706			
				<u>Investments:</u>					
5,106,224				Truist		5,076,918			
6,486,816				First Citizens Wealth Manage		6,180,472			
340,571				United Bank - CD		339,718			
776,461				Dana Investments/TD		890,501			
2,237,276				Ameritrade/Charles Schwab					
14,947,348				Multi Bank Securities		582,627			
				First Bank - CDs		2,158,430			
				Total Investments		15,228,666			
\$53,961,107.04				TOTAL CASH & INVESTMENTS		\$ 57,307,372.00			

FY 24/25

Date Prepared: May 1, 2025 Date Received in Finance:



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

	
Signature	Date

FY 24/25

Date Prepared:	May 1, 2025	Date Received in Finance:	
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This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:

	
Signature	Date

	Current Revenue	Changes	Proposed Revenue
52-3737-498094 Transfer from SCIF Grant 20165	\$2,400,000	+90,590	\$2,490,590

52-3736-398600 Transfer from WD IV	\$454,840		\$454,840
Total Revenues	\$2,854,840		\$2,945,430
	Current Expenditures	Changes	Proposed Expenditures
52-7208-524000 Construction	\$2,256,825	+253,514	\$2,510,338
52-7208-599100 Contingency	\$225,683	-\$162,924	\$62,759
52-7208-548012 Preliminary	\$18,500	-	\$18,500
52-7208-519927 Design, Permitting, Bid Services	\$213,832	-	\$213,832
52-7208-519906 Inspection Fees	\$110,000	-	\$110,000
52-7208-519983 Project Administration	\$30,000	-	\$30,000
Total Expenditures	\$2,854,840		\$2,945,430

State allocation for Water System Improvements in Columbus County Water and Sewer District IV.

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.

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

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 Project Ordinance shall be made available to the Budget Officer, the Project Manager, and the Finance Officer for direction in carrying out this project.

ADOPTED, this 5th day of May 2025

Lavern Coleman, Chairman
Columbus County Board of Commissioners

Jana Nealey, Clerk to the Board

Agenda Item #20: APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/REPLACEMENTS:

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

COMMITTEE	ZONE/EB	PERSON(S)	EXP. DATE	BOARD ACTION
Southeastern Community College Board of Trustees	EB	Dr. Maude Davis	06/30/2025	1-Featherson 2-Byrd Michael Powell APPT
Southeast Economic Development Commission	EB	Gary Lanier	04/30/2025	Gary Lanier Reappt. For a 1 year term only

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

At 7:49 P.M. A motion was made by Commissioner Watts and seconded by Commissioner Floyd 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 #21: APPROVAL of WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V COMBINATION MINUTES:

a. April 21, 2025 Regular Session

MOTION:

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

Agenda Item #22: WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT II – APPROVAL of the MEMORANDUM of AGREEMENT (MOA) PERMITTING EMERGENCY INTERCONNECTION with the TOWN OF CHADBOURN:

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested approval of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) permitting emergency interconnection with the Town of Chadbourn.

MOTION:

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

**MEMORANDUM AGREEMENT
BETWEEN COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER
AND SEWER DISTRICT II AND THE
TOWN OF CHADBOURN**

THIS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT made this the ____ day of May, 2025, by and between the Columbus County Water and Sewer District II, body corporate and politic of the State of North Carolina hereinafter called "District") and the Town of Chadbourn, a municipal corporation of the State of North Carolina (hereinafter called "Town").

WITNESSETH:

THAT WHEREAS, the District has a Public Water System (hereinafter called the "System") beyond the municipal boundary of the Town eastward along Chadbourn HWY

WHEREAS, the Town wishes to ensure uninterrupted water service for Town residents during infrastructure improvement projects.

WHEREAS, the District and the Town desire to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement in which the District shall permit the Town to connect to the System while receiving water supplied from the System in emergency situations for the benefit of the citizens of the Town during emergency water outages with costs of the connection being supplied by the Town and purchase of water used at the current bulk rate at the time of usage.

NOW, THEREFORE in consideration of the mutual covenants, terms and conditions contained herein accruing to the benefit of each of the respective parties hereto, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, it is agreed as follows:

1. The Town shall regulate the water access provided to these customers as all other residents of the Town.
2. The District shall supply water to the Town for these customers via the water system owned by the District that exists on Chadbourn HWY.
3. The Town shall read the meters, generate bills, mail bills and late notices and collect for non-payment..
4. For the purpose of billing, the District shall bill the Town for the gallons used by the Town at a rate equal to the price per gallon bulk rate at the time of use.

5. The Town shall reimburse the District for the meter or any other service to the interconnect which may be needed.
6. The Town shall notify the District and the District will have a reasonable amount of time to activate the interconnect at such times the interconnect shall be needed.
7. If at any point in time the District's System shall have insufficient water flow to supply the Town, the Town shall hold the District harmless.
8. The term of this Memorandum of Agreement shall be in effect for a period of five years after the date of execution by the parties.
9. The provisions of this Memorandum of Agreement may only be altered by written consent of both parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this instrument to be executed by their properly designated officials and their respective seals to be hereunto affixed on the day and year first written above, and this instrument is executed in duplicate.

COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT II

By: _____
Chairman of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: _____
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners

TOWN OF CHADBOURN

By: _____
Mayor

Attest: _____
Clerk

Agenda Item #23: WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT II – APPROVAL of TASK ORDER #13, for PHASES IV & V of the DOTHAN PROJECT/LEBANON CHURCH ROAD/BEAVERDAM ROAD WATERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT:

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested approval of Task Order #13 for Phases IV and V for the Dothan Project/Lebanon Church Road/ Beaverdam Road Waterline Extension Project.

MOTION:

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

TASK ORDER

This is Task Order No. Thirteen
(13), consisting of 5 pages.

Task Order

In accordance with Paragraph 1.01 of the Agreement Between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services – Task Order Edition, dated August 2, 2022 ("Agreement"), Owner and Engineer agree as follows:

1. Background Data

- a. Effective Date of Task Order:
- b. Owner: Columbus County
- c. Engineer: Green Engineering, PLLC
- d. Specific Project (title): Beaverdam Road Water Main Extensions Phases IV & V
- e. Specific Project (description): The scope of this work will include the planning, design, permitting, bidding, construction administration and observation of the installation of approximately ±34,365 linear feet of 12-inch diameter water main, ±3,450 LF of 8-inch diameter water main, ±82 water meter replacements, 12 fire hydrants and appurtenances.

2. Services of Engineer

- Preparation of a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER), if required.
- Prepare Construction Drawings and Contract Documents / Specifications for the ±34,365 linear feet of 12-inch diameter water main, ±3,450 LF of 8-inch diameter water main, ±82 water meter replacements, 12 fire hydrants and appurtenances.
- Obtain all regulatory permits required to construct the project including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Water System Extension Permit.
 - NCDOT Encroachment Agreement (for construction of the proposed improvements within the NCDOT rights of way).
 - Sedimentation / Erosion Control Permit.
- Perform Project Bidding services to include attending Pre-Bid Meeting(s), prepare all Request for Information (RFI's), prepare all Addendums, attend Bid Opening(s) and make Recommendation of Award to County on Lowest Responsible Bidder(s).

- Provide Construction Administration Services to include, at a minimum, the following:
 - Assist the County with the execution of Construction Contracts with the selected Contractor.
 - Review of all project material and equipment submittals / shop drawings.
 - Review and approve all Partial Payment Requests submitted by the Contractors.
 - Assist the County with all reimbursement requests.
 - Attend all Monthly Progress Meetings and provide Minutes for all meetings.
 - Respond to Contractors Request for Information during construction.
 - Provide all Engineer's Certifications once work is completed and the system is operational.
 - Assist the County with all project close-out documents.
- Provide Construction Observation Services to include, at a minimum, the following:
 - Coordinate and attend Pre-Construction Conference.
 - Shop drawing review.
 - Provide construction observation services.
 - Provide responses to Requests for Information (RFI's) from the Contractor.
 - Review, verify quantities and process contractor's Monthly Partial Payment Estimates.
 - Monitor contractor for compliance with Labor Standards when required by the Owner or funding agency.
 - Review request for Change Orders and make recommendations for approval/disapproval.
 - Provide start-up services and prepare operation and maintenance manuals (O&M) for the project's mechanical components.
 - Certify all completed work.
 - Provide the County with a complete set of As-built Drawings and O&M Manuals (digital and hard copy) where applicable.

3. County's Responsibilities

Owner shall have those responsibilities as set forth in the "Agreement between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services" dated August 2, 2022.

4. Time of Completion

- Project Design Three (3) Months
- Permitting Two (2) Months
- Bid / Award Two (2) Months
- Project Construction Nine (9) Months
- Project close-Out One (2) Months

5. Payments to Engineer

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

• Preliminary Engineering Report (If Required)	\$ 12,500.00
• Engineering Design	\$233,552.00
• Permitting & Bid Services	\$ 25,000.00
• Project Administration / Funding Services	\$ 40,650.00
• Construction Observation Services	\$ 94,850.00

Agenda Item #24: WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT IV – APPROVAL of the LOW BID from METCON, INC. the REVISED CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE, and CONTRACT from GREEN ENGINEERING for the LIVINGSTON CREEK PROJECT:

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested approval of the low bid from Metcon, Inc. negotiated to the amount of \$2,510,338.25, the revised capital project ordinance, and contract from Green Engineering for the Livingston Creek Project. Contract pending final approval from the County Manager and Attorney

MOTION:

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

April 29, 2025

Columbus County
127 W. Webster Street
Whiteville, North Carolina 28472

Attention: Mr. Edwin H. Madden, Jr., County Manager

SUBJECT: **Recommendation of Tentative Award**
Water System Extensions to Serve
Livingston Creek Service Area
Columbus County, North Carolina
PN: 24-078

Dear Mr. Madden:

Bids were received on Thursday, April 10, 2025, for the Water System Extensions to Serve Livingston Creek Service Area project. All Bids have been reviewed and tabulated as presented on the attached “Bid Tabulation”. The low Bidder for this work is Metcon, Inc. from Pembroke, North Carolina with a bid of \$2,698,883.25. This low bid exceeds the Engineer’s budgeted amount for this work. Green Engineering has Value Engineered the project and has identified \$188,545.00 that can be effectively removed from the project without altering the original service area. See attached “Value Engineering Spreadsheet”.

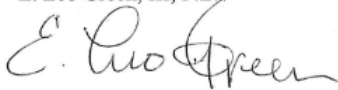
A summary of the project costs is presented below:

\$2,482,508.00	Total Construction Budgeted (Construction + 10% Contingency)
\$2,698,883.25	Bid Amount (Metcon, Inc.)
<u>\$ 188,545.00</u>	<u>Value Engineered Deductions</u>
\$2,510,338.25	Bid Amount - Negotiated

We are recommending the County add to the amended budget a 2.5% Contingency Line Item on the amount of 2.5% of the negotiated Bid amount, or \$62,759.00. The County will have to fund an additional \$90,590.00 to fund the construction of the project while maintaining a 2.5% Contingency.

If this is acceptable to the County, Green Engineering recommends a tentative award to Metcon, Inc. in the amount of \$2,510,338.25.

Please advise if you have any questions regarding the above information.

Respectfully,
E. Leo Green, III, P.E.


COLUMBUS COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
Ordinance making appropriations to Livingston Chapel Road Capital Project Fund
for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2024

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

Section 1: The following amounts are hereby made to the Livingston Chapel Road Capital Project as of May 5, 2025 pursuant to G.S. 159 -13.2 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.

	Current Revenue	Changes	Proposed Revenue
52-3737-498094 Transfer from SCIF Grant 20165	\$2,400,000	+90,590	\$2,490,590

52-3736-398600 Transfer from WD IV	\$454,840		\$454,840
Total Revenues	\$2,854,840		\$2,945,430
	Current Expenditures	Changes	Proposed Expenditures
52-7208-524000 Construction	\$2,256,825	+253,514	\$2,510,338
52-7208-599100 Contingency	\$225,683	-\$162,924	\$62,759
52-7208-548012 Preliminary	\$18,500	-	\$18,500
52-7208-519927 Design, Permitting, Bid Services	\$213,832	-	\$213,832
52-7208-519906 Inspection Fees	\$110,000	-	\$110,000
52-7208-519983 Project Administration	\$30,000	-	\$30,000
Total Expenditures	\$2,854,840		\$2,945,430

State allocation for Water System Improvements in Columbus County Water and Sewer District IV.

- 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.
- Section 3:** The Finance Director is hereby directed to maintain within the Project Fund sufficient specific detailed accounting records to satisfy all applicable regulations. The terms of any financing agreement also shall be met.
- 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 Project Ordinance shall be made available to the Budget Officer, the Project Manager, and the Finance Officer for direction in carrying out this project.

ADOPTED, this 5th day of May 2025

Lavern Coleman, Chairman
Columbus County Board of Commissioners

Jana Nealey, Clerk to the Board
Columbus County Board of Commissioners

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

MOTION:

At 7:57 P.M. Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #25: COMMENTS:

A. Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Byrd - I was surprised to realize that Columbus County Regional Hospital and New Hanover both received a grade C. Other hospitals in our area received A’s and B’s. Maybe Columbus County Hospital needs to tighten up and clean up their act a little bit. We deserve better than a grade C at our local county hospital, without a doubt.

Mr. Madden, I’d like to ask this board to write a letter to our representatives and request that we consider doing something similar to what the state of Georgia has done. It’s called the “Freedom to Farm” Act.

I have a friend down in Georgia, and I spoke to him over the weekend. There was a sudden burst of development around his land. He’s lived there his whole life; he runs a chicken farm. Now, with developers coming in around him, he’s dealing with a lot of frivolous lawsuits. I think we need more protections in place, especially with the growth we’re currently experiencing and expecting in the next few years.

We have to protect our farmers. I’ve emphasized this many times. They shut down the tobacco industry and put our tobacco farmers out of business, yet they’re allowing vape shops to pop up everywhere. I’m talking about

the government's lack of restrictions. From what I understand, anyone of any age can walk in and buy what they want at some of these shops. At least we used to have age restrictions on cigarettes.

And tobacco revenue used to support itself. Now all the money from vaping goes to India and other places. I don't know if we can do anything about that directly, or if our legislators can, but the vape tax definitely needs to be increased.

Back in the day, when the state needed tax revenue, the first thing they did was raise the cigarette tax. But now I understand the vape tax is lower than our grocery tax, and that's just not right. It's time for the state to step up and help us, or at least give us the authority here in our own county to raise the levy ourselves.

We've tried before to raise the sales tax by half a cent, but we don't have the authority, it has to go to a public vote. But with vape shops and similar businesses, we definitely need more control, oversight, and maybe some additional taxation.

County Manager Eddie Madden - Would you like us to incorporate both of these concerns into the same letter?

Commissioner Byrd - Let's send two different letters, one to address each concern, and send them to Bill Rabon, as well as Brenden Jones, Danny Britt, and Congressman Rouzer. We need help, especially with the way everything is growing right now. I'm sure many people here can relate to this: when a farmer tries to move a piece of equipment, drivers often refuse to move over, even a little. Some of that equipment can be up to 20 feet wide, no questions asked, and the farmer still has the right of way.

Most of the time, when the farmer is forced to stop, there's a mailbox, a trash can, or a parked vehicle blocking the way, and then both vehicles are stuck. Something needs to be done to ensure motorists understand that farmers have rights on these highways, even in or near housing developments. If we don't act now, this is going to become a serious problem.

County Manager Eddie Madden - Yes, and I would suggest that farmers who are not part of the Voluntary Agricultural District program inquire with the county about getting their farms enrolled to receive that protection.

Commissioner Byrd - Okay, well, I think it's time we start doing something to protect the farmer.

Commissioner Bullard – No comments.

Commissioner Watts – Yes. I spoke with the county attorney, and I'm not sure, she might have to answer some of my questions, but there is a concern I want to raise. I understand everyone has the right to free speech, and I'm not against protesting. However, we're seeing protests taking place near schools, with people lining the roads, and it's disrupting classes.

I've asked her if there's a way to speak with the Sheriff about this. Is there any way we can restrict protests around schools? If someone wants to protest, I think they should come here and protest us, or go to the school board. But protesting right in front of a school or in the middle of the road, especially while kids are in class, is becoming a problem.

Commissioner Bullard - They don't allow them on school property.

Commissioner Watts - But she's checked on some of the laws, and I think we need to enforce them, because it's really disrupting a certain school in this county.

Commissioner Byrd - And especially when they're coming from the far western side.

Commissioner Watts - There you go. And when it's on Highway 701, traffic gets backed up. The Sheriff can answer some questions since he's working traffic. We need to figure out how to stop this.

Attorney Prince - If you'd like, I can share the statutes that I found. There's a criminal statute, as well as a civil penalty ordinance under Chapter 2174.1. Both of these pertain more to roadways than to the school itself. The school can have policies or put up no-trespassing signs to control crowds on their property, but interrupting the flow of traffic on a state highway or street is another issue.

A person who willfully stands, sits, or lies upon a highway or street in such a manner as to impede the regular flow of traffic is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

A person who violates this subsection, participating in a demonstration intended to prohibit or impede the use of a highway or street, is guilty of a Class A1 misdemeanor. Class A1 carries much more serious penalties than Class 2. A Class A1 offense could result in jail time or other significant consequences.

Additionally, the county commissioners can impose an ordinance for pedestrians gathering, picketing, or protesting on roads or highways. However, if a school is located within a municipality, the ordinance wouldn't apply to that school or its surrounding roadways.

Commissioner Byrd - Now, wait a minute. Could you explain that again?

Attorney Prince - If you pass an ordinance, it will apply in the county, not within the municipality boundaries. The cities would have to join and pass the same ordinance.

Commissioner Byrd - Well, I think they would.

Attorney Prince - You may adopt an ordinance regulating the time, place, and manner of gatherings, picket lines, or protests by pedestrians that occur on state roadways and state highways. So basically, if you enact this, you would need to specify a place and time where someone can gather, picket, or protest.

Commissioner Bullard - So, you could allow it, like on a Saturday, so it wouldn't disrupt school.

Attorney Prince - Well, not on Highway 701, somewhere else in the county.

Commissioner Watts - Yeah, so let me ask you this, Sheriff, did you ask her about the fee we were talking about?

Sheriff Rogers - I know that in some places, to protest, people have to go to a designated location and get a permit. They also have to follow specific rules, like you said, especially around schools, otherwise, they can be charged differently. I was there; I saw it.

County Manager Eddie Madden – It was Smithfield.

Commissioner Watts - So I guess I would ask if we can look into this ordinance and see whether we can enforce it or press charges.

Attorney Prince - We can probably generate more money through civil citations than by charging a fee. And even then, we still wouldn't want to allow the organization to be set up on Highway 701.

Commissioner Watts - I think we need to establish a fee, and then turn around and reinvest that money back into the schools.

Commissioner Byrd - Let's put something together and use strong language.

Attorney Prince - And the money gained from civil citations should go back to the school system.

Commissioner Byrd - Could we charge as much as \$500 for a permit, Sheriff?

Attorney Prince - I can check on the amounts.

Commissioner Watts- They say to charge what it costs for extra law enforcement.

Chairman Coleman - How much extra law enforcement do you have for those?

Sheriff Rogers - I had eight officers out there besides myself and the chief, and we were directing traffic and trying to keep the kids in line while also managing the parents in the parking lot at the store. I told him the same thing: we couldn't block Highway 701 or stop traffic. We had to rearrange how we were going to pick up the kids so they could be seen over the public areas. It was a total disaster and very disruptive.

Chairman Coleman - The monetary costs that it incurred for the sheriff's department.

Commissioner Watts - It cost the taxpayers a lot of money that day.

Commissioner Byrd - But the danger it creates, that's the main issue too. I mean, the danger.

Commissioner Watts - Well, that's the way I look at it. I mean, you can get mad at me as a commissioner, but don't be out there arresting an employee, especially in front of children. Whatever we can do, we need to take care of the kids.

Attorney Prince - I'll figure out whatever we can do to make the most money off of it, as long as it goes back to the schools.

Commissioner Bullard - That particular day, I was talking to the superintendent. He said that about 50% of the students did not attend school.

Commissioner Watts - Can you have that for us by the next meeting?

Attorney Prince – Yes sir. Sheriff, if you'd like to speak about that after the meeting, I'd be glad to.

Sheriff Rogers – Ok.

Commissioner Featherson - First, I'd like to wish all the mothers a happy upcoming Mother's Day!

Also, on Wednesday, May 14, the Department of Aging will be holding their Senior Picnic at the fairgrounds. The event will begin at 10:00 a.m. and run until 2:00 p.m.

Additionally, we need to remind residents that changes are coming to utility bill payment options beginning in June. I know I'm one of those who have payments set to automatically draft, so I was reading up on the upcoming changes.

Mr. Madden, is the entire county now covered? I know we just received another grant for broadband service, will that be included?

County Manager Eddie Madden - No, ma'am, there are still areas that are considered unserved. However, there is another round of funding coming. I've spoken with the Department of Broadband Infrastructure, and they believe that the final round should cover everyone.

Commissioner Featherson - I want to give kudos to my granddaughter, Amber Featherson. She's graduating next week with her master's degree from a college in Charlotte. I'm very proud of her.

Commissioner Floyd - Happy Cinco de Mayo!

Vice Chairman Smith - I'd like to go on record personally thanking Representative Brenden Jones for all he's done for our county. Funding has been appropriated for our historical courthouse, the sheriff's office, this entire complex, and the airport terminal building. None of it could have been done without him, and I want to personally thank him.

Commissioner Byrd - And I'll concur.

Chairman Coleman – We all need to give him a big thank you for that.

B. County Manager:

County Manager Eddie Madden: Just a couple of things, as Ms. Featherson pointed out, we want to wish a Happy Mother's Day to all of our mothers.

You'll find an extensive calendar in your agenda package this time, which the Clerk has prepared for the remainder of the calendar year, so please take a moment to review it carefully.

There are a couple of upcoming reminders: First, the graduation at Southeastern Community College will be held on May 16th, at 9:00 A.M. Then, on May 30th, we'll have the Memorial Park ribbon-cutting and the Blue Star Monument dedication. The time for that event has been moved to 10:00 A.M.

We would appreciate your attendance at both events, and as always, we appreciate your time and attention this evening.

Chairman Coleman commented before the meeting ended that I just want to take a moment to thank the county and all of the county employees for the job they're doing. And when I say 'employees,' I also mean the citizens of Columbus County.

We are at a critical point with our children and these vape shops. Ultimately, it's up to the parents to step in and help. It's good to be a friend to your children, but not when it's killing them. What's friendship worth if you let your child destroy themselves with something like cancer? Then, when tragedy strikes, we want to point fingers, but when you point one finger, you've got four more pointing back at yourself.

So I'm challenging the parents of Columbus County: get on board with this issue. Visit these vape shops. See what they're selling your children. Know what your kids are doing. It's crucial, we've got to try to save our children.

And speaking of children, I want to say something too. Since you bragged about your granddaughter, I'm going to brag about mine. The East Columbus Gators are a 1A school playing in a 2A conference, and they're undefeated in conference play. They'll be starting the playoffs this Monday, and I encourage everyone to come out and support them. It's some great softball, and I can't say enough about those students. East Columbus may be a small school, but they've got big hearts.

Lastly, Mother's Day is coming up next week. I want to encourage everyone who has a mama, or even if it's not your biological mother, because many of us have been raised by strong, special women, to reach out. Let's call them all and tell them: Happy Mother's Day.

Commissioner Featherson - Mr. Chairman, I would like to take a moment to thank one of our utility workers. I believe his name is Dean. He did an excellent job. My sister was trying to get water service at her home, and Dean came out with his little magnet tool and discovered that she already had a meter installed. He was very patient, walking around with that tool until he located it. He even took the time to personally explain to her what to expect next. So I want to give kudos to Dean at the Water Department for his professionalism and dedication.

Agenda Item #20: ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:42 P.M., Vice Chairman Smith made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.