



COUNTY OF CARTERET

MINUTES

CARTERET COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Carteret County Administration Building, Beaufort, NC

Commissioners' Boardroom

Regular Meeting

6:00 p.m. February 16, 2026

Commissioners present: Chairman Chris Chadwick, Chuck Shinn, David Quinn, Marianne Waldrop, Keith Moore, and Chimer Clark.

Commissioners absent: Vice Chairman Mark Mansfield

Others present: County Manager/Attorney, Sharon Griffin
Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, Dee Meshaw
Assistant County Manager, Matt Reynal
Clerk to the Board/Advanced Public Information Officer,
Nick Wilson

A full and complete account of the entire Board of Commissioners meeting is archived on a video that is available for viewing on the Carteret County website www.carteretcountync.gov.

Item I. – Meeting Called to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Invocation

At 6 p.m., the honorable Carteret County Board of Commissioners convened in regular session. Chairman Chadwick called the regularly scheduled meeting to order, with appropriate public notice having been given.

He invited Commissioner Quinn to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

An invocation was provided by Pastor Wayne Warren from Hunting Quarters Church in Atlantic.

Item II. – Conflict of Interest / Cell Phone Statement

Chairman Chadwick read the conflict of interest statement, and there were no conflicts on the agenda for the Board.

Item III. – Adoption of Agenda

Commissioner Moore made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Waldrop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Item IV. – Consent Agenda

Commissioner Shinn made a motion to adopt the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The approval of the consent agenda, as presented, included the approval of the following items:

- Minutes from the Jan. 12, 2026, Board of Commissioners Meeting.
- Tax Administrator's Report for January 2026, the January 2026 Releases and Refunds report, and the January 2026 NCVTS Reports.
- Budget amendments
 - Acceptance of a \$15,000 CCEC Round Up grant to address unmet client needs.
 - Acceptance of \$1,547 in additional WIC funding through Agreement Addendum 403, Revision 2.
 - Acceptance of a \$20,000 grant to support Carteret County Veterans Services
- Service Agreement with MILCO, LLC for a Steel Metal Building with Pad for Solid Waste Equipment in the total amount of \$251,725, with a budget amendment of \$152,000.
- Lease and service agreement with Southeastern Integrated Care for Peer Recovery Center services.
- Contract with Southeastern Life Center to support the START Program.
- Office Space Lease Renewal for North Carolina Department of Adult Correction– Division of Probation and Parole.

Item V. – Public Comments

Chairman Chadwick opened the public comment period. The following is a summary of all citizen remarks, which may be viewed in their entirety in a video on the County website at www.carteretcountync.gov in the Agenda center under the corresponding meeting.

- Melissa Urquhart, 220 Trailwood Drive, Newport, serves on the Board of the Bogue Banks Football Club, a competitive travel soccer club, and a parent to three children, talked about return on investment for public dollars. She referenced sports complexes in Wilson and Goldsboro as economic drivers. She said tourism in Carteret County is not year-round and that travel tourism could help that as the main seasons are spring and fall – it could help support the workforce and put heads in beds. She suggested a potential partnership with Carteret Community College as they add additional teams in the upcoming year and their need for facilities grows.
- Chuck Lindner, of 123 Center Drive, Atlantic Beach, with Morehead City Little

League (MHCLL), addressed the Board and invited the board to attend the 71st opening ceremonies for MHCLL at 1 p.m. March 21 at Swinson Park. He discussed the lack of playing fields for the youth in the county and said the idea for the program is to help youth become productive citizens and keep them off the street. He thanked law enforcement for helping keep youth safe. He encouraged all youth organizations in the county to work together to make a difference for the youth of the community with the goal of building more recreation fields. His recommendations centered around building more fields and facilities in a central location in the county, revisiting acreage between highways 24 & 70, soliciting State and Federal representatives to help procure acreage, allowing usage of fields at school facilities, substituting artificial turf for grass to allow for more playing time and less maintenance concerns. MHCLL is ready to pay to do this (install artificial turf) at Swinson Park. He ended by referencing a JFK quote in honor of President's Day and changing country to county, "Ask not what your county can do for you, but what you can do for your county."

- Mike Bollinger, of 401 Meeting Street, Beaufort, representing Beaufort Little League, said he supported Morehead City Little League's request for more playing fields. Beaufort Little League is celebrating its 69th anniversary this year. He thanked the county Parks & Recreation Department for what they provide to include Freedom Park in Beaufort and the support. He said he would like to see everyone work together and collaborate to bring more athletic fields to support not only youth recreation but also adult recreation. He thanked the county commissioners and staff for all of their contributions.
- Tiffany Padgett, 609 Mandy Court, Morehead City, Vice President of Morehead City Little League, presented a case for more fields in Morehead City. She said that often the lack of field inventory leaves the league scrambling for space. Current assets are operating at full or above capacity. She said an investment in more fields/sports tourism could bring revenue to the county and assist in juvenile crime prevention. Currently, the area loses bids to host the events because of the lack of a multi-field complex. She urged the council to prioritize the expansion of fields in the upcoming budget.

Item VI. Acknowledgment of County Staff and Partners for Winter Storm Response

Chairman Chadwick thanked county employees and surrounding partners for their response to the recent winter storm that dropped 10-15 inches throughout the county and up to 3 feet of snow in some areas. Sixty county employees who went above and beyond in the emergency operation center, in the freezing temperatures clearing roads and more were recognized for their efforts. Chadwick also thanked the County's partners at Salvation Army

for opening the warming centers and working in conjunction with DSS. Eleven department heads were present. A photo was taken with the department heads and the Board of Commissioners.

Item VII. Resolution 2026-R-04—Supporting the Town of Peletier's Request for an NCDOT Safety Review at the Intersection of West Firetower Road and Peletier Loop Road

Commissioner Quinn read a resolution outlining the safety concerns of the intersection of West Firetower Road and Peletier Loop Road. The Town of Peletier adopted a resolution on Jan. 25, 2026 seeking NCDOT's assistance and requested the county do the same. The resolution formally requests NCDOT conduct a safety review of the intersection, consider installing low-cost short-term improvements as well as to consider installing more permanent improvements in the future. The resolution does not advocate for a specific solution, rather, it asks NCDOT to conduct a safety study. The signed resolution is to be forwarded to the Town of Peletier, NCDOT and to the NC State House Representatives.

Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to approve the resolution as presented and enter it into the record. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Quinn. The motion passed unanimously.

Item VIII. Presentation and request for start-up funds for a Respite Program at the Leon Mann Jr. Enrichment Center

Shelly Ashley, Senior Services Director and Dr. Randall Williams, Health & Human Services Director made a presentation outlining the community need, the benefits and the cost of implementing a Respite Program at the Leon Mann Jr. Enrichment Center, 3820 Galantis Dr., Morehead City.

Dr. Williams thanked the board for taking an interest in the Alzheimer's and senior population. He said 25% of the county is over 65 and that one out of 10 Americans will get Alzheimer's.

Ashley outlined the proposed program, highlighting that a respite program will offer socialization and activities for loved ones of caregivers who have Alzheimer's. She stressed that this program will not offer medical care – it is a respite program to bring their loved ones so they can have a little time during the day.

Ashley and Dr. Williams researched and visited different programs around the state. Ashley said that they think this is the best option for Carteret County. The program would be offered for 4 hours, one day a week at the Leon Mann Jr. Enrichment Center. She outlined a proposed budget for start-up costs as well as ongoing program costs. The start-up budget costs were presented as an estimated \$20,000.

Staff researched grant opportunities to fund the program. While the Home Community Care & Block Grant (HCCBG) through the NC Department of Health & Human Services will not cover the program's startup costs, they offer funding opportunities to help sustain the program once

it is up and running. The goal is to apply for the HCCBG program in the future to assist with ongoing program costs.

Chairman Chadwick asked if this would start in a new budget year or sooner. Dr. Williams explained the budget had been prepared for either option. Commissioner Chadwick expressed that he would like to see this get started sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Shinn asked for clarification about the line item in the presentation's budget for \$7,620 for facilities. Ashley explained that the room at the Leon Mann Center will need some transformation to include alarming the exits, the addition of comfortable seating in the form of recliners and more. She expressed that safety is the biggest concern and the room will need some upfitting.

Commissioner Quinn asked if the service would be by appointment. Dr. Williams said that yes, an appointment will need to be made and that there will be a \$40 fee.

Chairman Chadwick expressed his support for the program and his gratitude for staff for bringing the presentation forward. He said that for a very few dollars they can get the program up and running and that the State would be funding most of the program going forward. He asked for if the Board would like to entertain a motion to move forward.

County Manager Sharon Griffin suggested if the board wanted to approve a motion tonight to make a motion to approve the start-up of the respite program and to hire a part-time program manager.

Commissioner Waldrop asked what the impact of a proposed \$20,000 budget amendment to start the respite program would be on the current budget.

County Manager Griffin explained there are not any issues as some revenues have exceed expenditures. She said that to move forward there needs to be approval of a budget amendment. A draft budget amendment was provided in the packet for board consideration.

Commissioner Quinn shared his personal experience having a loved one suffering from dementia. He said he would like to act on it as soon as possible and thanked the staff for bringing this forward in such a quick and professional manner.

Commissioner Shinn questioned the numbers in the presentation stating that the \$19,000 budget amendment doesn't match the \$20,000 requested for startup funds.

Commissioner Clark stated that he was not in favor of making spur of the moment budget changes.

Chair Chadwick stated that this was not a spur of the moment decision and that the board had directed staff to bring this forward a few months back and that he thought everyone was in favor of doing it.

Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to approve moving forward with changing the budget amendment to \$20,000 to cover start-up costs and to hire a part-time program manager for the respite program. Commissioner Quinn seconded the motion.

The motion was approved with a 3-2 vote. Commissioners Chadwick, Waldrop and Quinn voted in favor and Commissioners Shinn and Clark voted against the motion.

Item IX. Presentation of the FY 2025 Audit Report by PBMares

Deputy County Manager/Finance Director Dee Meshaw provided a high-level review of the county's finances for fiscal year ending June 2025. She explained the presentation will focus on the County's general fund, the operating fund for the county. She said everything is accounted for in the general fund unless there is a law that dictates it is in another fund. The county is about to enter into budget season where restricted funds will be looked into. Meshaw said tonight will focus on the county's general fund.

Meshaw reported that the county ended the fiscal year in a strong financial position. Revenue sources exceeded the budget and expenditures were under budget. The presentation reviewed the county's revenue sources: Ad valorem taxes accounted for 48% of the budget and other taxes accounted for 18%.

Next, she provided a comparison of major revenue categories, amended final budget, actual revenues and the variance. \$59.61 million was budgeted and the county received \$62.02 million in revenues. \$2.14 million came from the tax department due to a higher tax collection rate which resulted in positive revenue. Other revenue sources include but are not limited to sales tax, permits and fees and Register of Deeds fees.

Education is the largest expenditure at 28%, the second largest expenditures are public safety and human services at 18% each, and debt service is 7% of expenditures. Meshaw presented a chart broken out by function of government with amended, actual and variance – all came in under budget. Salaries and benefits under spent by \$3.54 million, maintenance by \$2 million and operating by \$2.94 million.

The final budget came in with an overage of \$8.16 million of which \$2.88 is unrestricted and is in the spendable fund balance. Meshaw discussed the difference between unassigned and restricted fund balance. She reported that as of June 30, 2025 there is \$49.4 million or 42.6% of the general fund available as a rainy-day fund in the case of a hurricane or other event as a buffer in case of an economic downturn.

Meshaw said, "We are very fortunate to have such healthy finances and such a healthy fund balance." She went on to express gratitude for the audited financial statements as it is a lot of work. She thanked the Commissioners for their support and trust in the finance department, as well as the County Manager, department heads and staff for submitting work timely and accurately. "It takes a whole team to get a successful, completed audit," Meshaw said. She went on to thank PBMares and their entire team, stating how fortunate the county is to have someone with their capabilities in Morehead City.

Audit Report by Robbie Bittner of PBMares

Robbie Bittner, Audit Partner with PBMares for the audit engagement with the county, provided a report to the Commissioners on the annual audit for FY2025 ending June 30, 2025.

Bittner said as the auditor their responsibility is to render an opinion as to whether or not your financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAP). The auditor issues 4 types of opinions with the highest level of assurance being the unmodified or clean opinion.

The county received the unmodified/clean opinion, a Triple A rating. A AAA-rating represents the highest possible creditworthiness assigned by rating agencies, indicating the lowest expectation of default risk and exceptional capacity to meet financial commitments

Due to delays at the state level, the audit deadline was extended. The county's audit met the deadline.

Bittner updated the Commissioners that there will be a significant change next year that will require the budget to actual statement to be required as supplementary information in the non-audited section of the audit statement.

There were no questions from the Commissioners for Bittner regarding the audit.

Item X. Public Hearing on a proposal to rezone 1.61 acres of Parcel 630501352311000 (total 6.02 acres) from B-3 (Planned Business) and R-20 (Single-Family Residential) to B-1 (General Business). Property is located at 4301 NC Highway 24, Newport, NC 28570.

Planning Director Ben Warren presented a request submitted on behalf of the property owner Julian Weeks to rezone 4301 NC Highway 24, Newport from B-3 and R-20 to B-1 General Business.

Warren explained that B-3 is typically for shopping center development, R-20 is generally intended for residential, and B-1 is primarily intended for general and professional businesses. He said the property is located within the Future Land Maps Limited Transition Area and is consistent with the policies in the Future Land Use Plan. The request was heard at the January Planning Commission meeting. The only speaker at the meeting was the applicant. One letter in support of the rezoning was received by the county planning department. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval.

Commissioner Shinn made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Waldrop to open a public hearing. The motion was approved unanimously.

Josh Edmondson, Tidewater and Associates, 1069 Cedar Point Blvd., said he felt the request is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan and that it is very compatible with existing uses.

Commissioner Shinn made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Waldrop. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Shinn made a motion to approve the rezoning of 1.61 acres of parcel 630501352311000 at 4301 NC Highway, Newport, NC 28570 from B-3 (Planned Business) and R-20 (Single-Family Residential) to B-1 (General Business). Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Shinn made a motion to approve the Statement of Planned Consistency & Reasonableness. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Waldrop and was approved unanimously.

Item XI. Public Hearing on a proposal to rezone Parcel 633602750805000 from R-15M (Moderate Density Residential) to B-1-CZ (General Business – Conditional Zoning). The parcel is located on the east side of Pete Road, approximately 1,100 feet north of its intersection with NC Highway 24, and is approximately 3.78- acres in size.

Planning Director Ben Warren presented a request from Billy Rouse on behalf of Rouse's Septic Tank Inc. to rezone Parcel 633602750805000 from R-15M (Moderate Density Residential) to B-1-CZ (General Business–Conditional Zoning). He reported that the 3.78-acre parcel falls within the Future Land Use Plan's Limited Transition Area and is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.

This is a conditional request. The applicant proposed the following conditions and allowed uses:

Uses: Contractor's office, accessory buildings, contractor storage yard

Parking: One standard parking space per 200 sq. ft. of office and one standard space per 600 sq. ft. of gross floor area other than office. The proposed site plan includes 400 sq. ft. office space–2 parking spaces and 4,600 sq. ft. gross floor space–8 parking spaces.

Landscape Buffer: A 10' vegetative planting area with plantings from group one and group two per section 1601.1(D) of Appendix C of the Carteret County Zoning Ordinance.

Warren said the item was heard at the January Planning Commission meeting. The applicant was the only speaker. The Planning office received 6 letters in support of the rezoning. The Planning Commission unanimously approved the recommendation for rezoning.

Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to enter into a public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Clark. The motion carried unanimously.

There were no speakers for the public hearing.

Commissioner Moore made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Quinn and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Shinn made a motion to approve the request to rezone Parcel 633602750805000 from R-15M (Moderate Density Residential) to B-1-CZ (General Business – Conditional Zoning). The parcel is located on the east side of Pete Road, approximately 1,100 feet north of its intersection with NC Highway 24, and is approximately 3.78- acres in size. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Shinn made a motion to approve the Statement of Planned Consistency & Reasonableness. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Quinn. The motion passed unanimously.

Item XI. Public Hearing on a proposal to rezone Parcel 634602552367000 from B-2 (Marine Business District) to B-1 (General Business District). The property is located at 966 NC Highway 24, Newport, NC 28570, and is approximately 1.26 acres in size.

Planning Director Ben Warren presented a request from Jason Arthur Construction on behalf of Meridian Seafood, Inc. to rezone an approximately 1.26-acre parcel at 966 NC Highway 24, Newport from B-2 (Marine Business District) to B-1 (General Business District). He said the proposed rezoning is consistent with development policies in the Future Land Use Plan. The rezoning request was heard at the January Planning Commission meeting. There were no speakers at that meeting. The Planning office received 1 mail in comment expressing support for the rezoning. The Planning Commission unanimously approved the recommendation for rezoning.

Commissioner Shinn made a motion that was seconded by Commissioner Moore to enter into public hearing. Motion was approved unanimously.

There were no speakers for the public hearing.

Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Moore and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Clark made a motion to approve the request to rezone Parcel 634602552367000 from B-2 (Marine Business District) to B-1 (General Business District). The property is located at 966 NC Highway 24, Newport, NC 28570, and is approximately 1.26 acres in size. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Waldrop.

A motion was made by Commissioner Clerk, seconded by Commissioner Waldrop and approved unanimously to approve the Statement of Planned Consistency & Reasonableness.

Item XII. Manager's Report

County Manager Sharon Griffin delivered the Manager's Report. Griffin recognized Dee Meshaw and her team for the hard work they put into the audit. She also recognized Nick Wilson and announced that he received his Certified County Clerk designation.

The report highlighted Early Voting, Tax Office Information and the Coastal Home & Garden Show.

- Early Voting - Strong turnout so far - Election Day is Tuesday, March 3.
- Tax office reminder 2026 individual and business/personal property listings due April 15. Information is available on the county website.
- Coastal Home & Garden Show is coming up March 7-8 at the Crystal Coast Civic center with more than 60 vendors scheduled.

Item XIII. – Board Appointments

The following appointments were *approved unanimously*:

Board of Equalization and Review

- Allison Bernauer – Reappointment to a 1-year term
- Robert Buckley – Reappointment to a 1-year term
- Leslie Daniels – Reappointment to a 1-year term
- Amy Lock – Reappointment to a 1-year term
- Jeffrey Nelson – Reappointment to a 1-year term
- Matt Shortway – Reappointment to a 1-year term

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council

- Ruthie Magee – Appointment to fill an unexpired term (member under age 21)

Zoning Board of Adjustment

- Clark Whitlow, Jr. – Appointment to fill a three-year term (alternate seat)

Item XIV. – Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Clark

- Commended the vast majority of Carteret County citizens for recognizing the need to stay home and understanding that they might not be prepared to drive in the snow during the recent winter storm.

Commissioner Shinn

- Expressed appreciation for staff's efforts during the snow storm and to the citizens for staying home and using good common sense.
- Thanked Dee Meshaw and Mr. Bittner for the audit.

Commissioner Waldrop

- Wished everyone a happy President's Day.
- Expressed appreciation for all those who spoke about Parks & Rec, who are participating in the master plan update and are consistently a voice for our children
- Discussed participating in the "Our State, Our Homes" program with the Department of Economic Development.
- Thanked Emergency Services for their work during the storm.
- Stated this election is very important and reminded voters that the synergy of the board is important as well as the culture of the board.
- Expressed gratitude at moving forward with the respite program. Those people are taxpayers and have been waiting for this program.
- Thanked Dee Meshaw and Finance for the great audit and all they do year-round.

- Reminded everyone that budget season is coming and expressed a desire to keep moving forward.

Commissioner Moore

- Thanked county staff for their hard work, long hours and quick response during the winter storm.
- Thanked NCDOT for helping out and getting the main drags opened up and thanked citizens for staying off the roads while this work was being done.
- Reminded everyone to be safe.

Commissioner Quinn

- Welcomed new Emergency Services director Billy Matthias.
- Thanked commissioners for supporting the resolution to improve safety at the intersection of West Firetower Road and Peletier Loop Road. Thanked Celeste Cairns who took time to meet about the safety concern and Peletier Town Councilwoman Donna Bierly who spearheaded the effort to improve safety at the intersection.
- Thanked Dee Meshaw and her team for all the hard work to obtain a AAA rating on the audit, the highest you can get.
- Thanked staff and Ms. Smith for the Respite Program proposal.
- Thanked those who spoke during public comment about Parks & Rec. and expressed his understanding for the need for additional recreational opportunities for the youth.
- Stated the county looks after everybody from seniors to youth.
- Talked about the services the county provides on a daily basis and said they need to be celebrated on a day to day basis.

Chairman Chadwick

- Expressed thankfulness that for moving forward with the Respite Care program.
- Encouraged the public to let the county know if they have ideas as to where to acquire property for potential future recreational usage. He reassured the public that the county is looking and understands the need.
- Stated the county honored the victims of the Feb. 13, 2022 plane crash by lighting up the courthouse cupola blue and expressed remembrance of the victims encouraging everyone to keep the families in their hearts.
- Mentioned the recent ground breaking of the Hwy. 24 boat ramp stating it would be one of the largest boat ramps in the state.
- Reminded everyone that the new health plex, a \$50 million facility, in Cedar Point would be breaking ground soon and that it will have an emergency room, health offices, testing, a surgery center and more. The ground breaking is at 4 p.m. Feb. 26, 2026.
- He said the job is tough and it doesn't get a lot of accolades but you have to stay the course and do what is right for the county reminding everyone that large projects such as the boat ramp and health plex take time and board effort.

- Stated that the county is growing by leaps and bounds and we will have to spend a little money. We want to be as conservative as possible and get the best deals. We have to be in a strong financial position. There are some things coming up to include ball fields, respite care and our employees.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Chairman Chadwick asked for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Moore made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Waldrop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

At 7:48 p.m., the Board of Commissioners adjourned.



Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

By:


Nick Wilson, Clerk to the Board

APPROVED:

By:


Chris Chadwick, Chairman
Carteret County Board of Commissioners

Note: Copies of attachments (Alt.), ordinances, resolutions, contracts, presentations, and supporting material considered by the Board of Commissioners at this meeting are on file in the office of the Clerk. Attempts have been made to accurately spell each podium speaker.