



Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting

January 5, 2026

MINUTES

The January 5, 2026 Warren County Board of Commissioners Meeting was called to order by Chairman Al Cooper, followed by a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners present were Bertadean Baker, Victor Hunt, Angelena Kearney Dunlap, and Tare Davis. Others present were County Manager Crystal Smith, Assistant County Manager Matt Garner, County Attorney Shiekell Richardson, and Interim Finance Officer Chuck Murray.

1. SPECIAL RECOGNITION

A. Presentation of Advanced Law Enforcement Certification to Sgt. Forest Hewlin - Sheriff John Branche

Sheriff John Branche presented Sgt. Forest Hewlin with Advanced Law Enforcement Certification.

2. ADOPT SUGGESTED AGENDA

On motion of Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Suggested Agenda was adopted.

Chairman Cooper read the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement and no conflicts were identified.

3. PRESENTATIONS

A. Spectrum Broadband Internet Access Update - Justin DeLancey

Justin DeLancey, Charter Communications Director of Government Affairs, provided an update on Broadband access. To date, over 5,000 locations have been connected to Spectrum Broadband Internet. In February, Spectrum will have completed RDOF, GREAT Grant, and CAB responsibilities with over 5,000 homes served. The BEAD Program will increase the amount of homes they will reach by adding roughly 100 more homes. Questions and responses following the presentations are listed here:

1. When will all the generic wiring in the county be completed? For Spectrum, wiring will be completed by the end of February 2026.
2. What is the priority of wiring, zip codes, lake vs. Farms, commercial vs. cities, paved vs. dirt roads? Priority depends on which round of funding the area was in and proximity to existing lines.
3. Explain RDOF, do these addresses have priority, if not why? Have you received payment to wire these addresses? RDOF was done off of Census mapping from 2019. Payment for waiting is done in the form of reimbursement from the grants.
4. Will all of the wiring in rural areas be ground or electric pole wired, and what are the benefits of ground vs. pole? Ariel builds are faster but Spectrum doesn't own any poles which means they have to get an agreement from the pole owner to place on poles.
5. If you make an overbite in wiring roads, businesses, homes, do you have a plan to immediately fix the overbite? That depends on several factors. Anyone that thinks they were missed should contact County staff and have them notify Justin DeLancey so the problem can be addressed.

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS - REGULAR BOARD MEETING

1. Barbara Espinosa voiced concerns about the Director of Planning. She stated that the Planning Board does not receive items in time to prepare for meetings, incorrect information is often given, and there is a need for professionalism. Ms. Espinosa stated she is resigning from the Planning Board because she is not willing to jeopardize her integrity.
2. Reinaldo Espinosa said it is a shame that a lady has to resign from the Planning Board because there is no accountability. He stated that an investigation into a Planning Board member's

behavior was requested but nothing was done. Mr. Espinosa further stated that people that work here should know what they are doing.

3. Joe Zeno, Chair of the Zoning Board of Adjustments and member of the UDO Committee, complained about signs throughout the county that are a direct violation of the Zoning Ordinance. He stated none of the signs have proper permits and there is no enforcement of the ordinance. Mr. Zeno stated more signs go up every day. Mr. Zeno asked that owners of the signs be notified and fined.
4. Lisa Olliver with Center for Energy Education provided handouts with upcoming events.
5. Whitley Jones of Center for Energy Education discussed an upcoming workshop with North Carolina Environmental Justice and NC Solar Organization. The event will take place on January 23, 2026.
6. Dylan Stickney stated that the recent decision of the UDO Committee to recommend no changes to the requirements for Solar Farms would exclude TED Renewables from having a chance to bring development to this county.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes of December 1, 2025 Organizational and Regular Meeting

On motion of Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the minutes of the December 1, 2025 Regular Meeting were approved.

B. Tax Collector's Report for November 2025 Presented for Board's Information in Accordance with NCGS 105-350

Motion was made by Commissioner Hunt and seconded by Commissioner Davis to approve the Tax Collector's Report. Commissioner Davis called for discussion and stated that the collection rate at the time of the report was 53.22 % and delinquent taxes are a concern. Tax Administrator Marian Cascone stated that the report was for the month of November, and as of January 5, 2026, the collection rate is up to 86.77%. Following discussion, the vote was unanimous to approve the Tax Collector's Report for November 2025.

C. Tax Release Requests (over/under \$100) in Accordance with NCGS 105-381 "Taxpayer's Remedies" as Information Only

On motion of Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Tax Release Requests information was accepted.

6. COUNTY MANAGER'S UPDATE – Crystal Smith

A. New Hire Update - Human Resources Director - Lottie Terry

County Manager Crystal Smith stated that, effective January 1, 2026, Warren County has hired Lottie Terry to serve as the Human Resources Director as an annual salary of \$83,000.

B. County Department Heads Retreat and Employees New Year Kick-Off — Warren County... It's A Vibe

County Manager Crystal Smith stated a Department Heads Retreat will be held on January 15 and 16 in Wake Forest. This will be a time for professional development provided by Vance Granville Community College as well as members of County staff.

County Manager Crystal Smith further stated that the Employees New Year Kick-Off will be held on January 23, 2026 at 12:00 noon at the Armory. Lunch and entertainment will be provided. The theme of the event is "Warren County - It's a Vibe".

C. Department Heads and Designee - Volunteer/Advisory Board Training — January 7, 2026 | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Training for Department Heads with Boards/Committees/Commissions was held on January 7, 2026. A training for members of Boards/Committees/Commissions will be held soon.

7. FINANCE OFFICE – Chuck Murray

A. Consider Approval of Budget Amendment #3 to the FY26 Budget

- This amendment is necessary to recognize lottery funding and capital expenditures for

School projects, and additional funding for pump and haul at the Soul City Blvd sewer pump station

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, and duly carried by unanimous vote, Budget Amendment #3 to the FY26 Budget was approved.

8. ACTION ITEMS

A. Consider Approval of Site Plan for Farmers Market Pavilion and Restroom - Planning Director Mark Bloomer

On motion of Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Site Plan for Farmers Market Pavilion and Bathroom was approved.

B. Consider Approval of Resolution Endorsing the Norlina Mobility Hub Concept Plan, 30% Design Package, and Continued Partnership with North Carolina Department of Transportation, Warren County, and Stakeholders

On motion of Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Resolution Endorsing the Norlina Mobility Hub Concept Plan, 30% Design Package, and Continued Partnership with North Carolina Department of Transportation, Warren County, and Stakeholders was approved.

C. Consider Approval of Recommended FY26 Non-Profit Grant Awards Totalling \$50,000 - Clerk to the Board Paula Pulley

On motion of Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the recommended FY26 Non-Profit Grant awards totaling \$50,000 were approved.

D. Consider Approval of Resolution for Tax Certification in Transfer of Real Property

On motion of Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Resolution for Tax Certification in Transfer of Real Property was approved.

E. Consider Approval of Warren County Armory Civic Center Facility Use Fee Waiver Request from Warren County NAACP for February 3, 2026 Meet the Candidates Forum

- **This item meets the requirements for fee waiver. If fee waiver is granted, a \$300 non-refundable Cleaning/Damage Fee will be due.**

On motion of Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Warren County Armory Civic Center Facility Use Fee Waiver Request from Warren County NAACP for February 3, 2026 was approved.

9. BOARDS/COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS

A. Consider Appointment of Gail Richardson to a First Three-Year Term to the Memorial Library Board of Trustees Beginning October 1, 2025 and Ending September 30, 2028

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and duly carried by unanimous vote, Gail Richardson was appointed to a first three-year term to the Memorial Library Board of Trustees beginning October 1, 2025 and ending September 30, 2028.

B. Consider Appointment of Tyrone Melton and Eushownda Burton to First Three-Year Terms on the Recreation Commission Beginning December 1, 2025 and Ending November 30, 2028

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, and duly carried by unanimous vote, Tyrone Melton and Eushownda Burton were appointed to first three-year terms on the Recreation Commission beginning December 1, 2025 and ending November 30, 2028.

C. Consider Appointment of Wyatt Andrews to a First Three-Year Term on Lake Gaston Weed Control Council Beginning January 2026 and Ending December 2028

On motion of Commissioner Baker, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and duly carried by unanimous vote, Wyatt Andrews was appointed to a first three-year term on the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council beginning January 2026 and ending December 2028.

D. Consider Appointment of Johan Franz to a First Three-Year Term on the Lake Gaston Weed

Control Council Beginning March 2026 and Ending February 2029

On motion of Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, Johan Franz was appointed to a first three-year term on the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council beginning March 2026 and ending February 2029.

10. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' UPDATES

Commissioner Davis:

- Reported that the Chief of Soul City Volunteer Fire Department asked for more time before putting the fire department back in service.
- Stated that signs around the county have gotten bad and are dangerous in the right-of-way. he suggests having employees put notices on signs of potential fines.
- Stated he would like to see the County invest in their employees. He stated that a holiday bonus was not discussed in time this year and he would like to make sure it is in the next budget.

Commissioner Kearney Dunlap:

- Took part in All Saints Episcopal Church Celebration
- Attended several Christmas Parties
- Attended the Farmers Market groundbreaking ceremony.

Chairman Cooper:

- Attended many holiday events
- Attended the Farmers Market groundbreaking ceremony.

Following the Board of Commissioners updates, Tyrone Melton was called to the podium to speak about the Soul City Volunteer Fire Department. He stated that he was unaware of the need to extend the suspension of the fire department as he was not included in the meeting with Chief Stith. Mr. Melton stated that the Board of the fire department was not aware of any outstanding issues that would cause them not to be ready. Commissioner Davis provided information that he received from Chief Stith including that turn-out gear was not ready. Commissioner Hunt stated that the request from Chief Stith should come to the Board of Commissioners in writing.

11. ADJOURN January 5, 2026 BOARD MEETING

On motion of Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the January 5, 2026 Regular Meeting was adjourned.

Paula Pulley, Clerk to the Board