



Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting

May 4, 2026

MINUTES

Chairman Al Cooper called the May 4, 2026 meeting to order, followed by a moment of silence in remembrance of former Board of Elections Director Debbie Formyduval and the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners present were Tare Davis, Angelena Kearney Dunlap, Bertadean Baker, and Victor Hunt. Others present were County Manager Crystal Smith, Assistant County Manager Matt Garner, Finance Officer Alice Degaetano, and Chuck Murray.

1. PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby served that the Warren County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on Monday, May 4, 2026 at 6:00 PM in the Warren County Armory Civic Center (501 US Highway 158 Business E. Warrenton, NC 27589).

Petition to make several changes to Warren County's current solar farm ordinances – 30. Solar Farms (also known as a Solar Energy System – SES – with Photovoltaic Systems).

A. Comments from Staff and Board of Commissioners

Planning Director Mark Bloomer provided an overview of the requested Text Amendments from TED Renewables for changes to the Solar Ordinance. Dylan Stickney of TED Renewables stated that they have been working on projects in Warren County since 2022, prior to changes in the ordinance that included size and location restrictions, and that TED Renewables would like to work with the County and be an asset to the area.

B. Public Hearing Citizen Comments

Prior to the opening of the meeting, 41 citizens signed up to speak during Citizen Comments. Of those that signed up, five declined or were not available when called. 19 citizens spoke in opposition to the proposed changes and 17 spoke in favor of the proposed changes. Three petitions were delivered to Clerk to the Board Paula Pulley; one with 168 signatures requesting the Commissioners to retain current regulations on Solar Farms, one with 345 signatures requesting Commissioners deny the request for proposed changes to the Solar Ordinance, and one with 188 signatures in favor of the proposed changes.

C. Close Public Hearing

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Public Hearing was closed.

2. ADOPT SUGGESTED AGENDA

On motion of Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Suggested Agenda was adopted.

3. PRESENTATIONS

County Manager Crystal Smith and Finance Director Alice Degaetano presented the FY27 Proposed Budget.



Warren County Government
602 West Ridgeway Street
Warrenton, NC 27589
252-257-3115 | <https://www.warrencountync.com>

County Manager's FY'27 Budget Message

May 4, 2026

Dear Members of the Board of Commissioners and Residents of Warren County,

I am pleased to present the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget for Warren County. This budget reflects a strong commitment to fiscal responsibility, transparency, and long-term investment in our community's future.

The budget development process began with the distribution of a budget calendar, preparation forms, and instructions to all county departments and to external agencies and organizations receiving county funding. The County completed its property revaluation during FY 2025–2026, resulting in a tax rate of \$7.96 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The proposed tax rate for FY 2026–2027 is 61.96 cents, representing a 4.0-cent increase. Each one-cent change in the tax rate generates approximately \$450,540 in revenue.

To balance the proposed budget, an appropriation of \$2,426,585 from the County's fund balance is recommended.

The recommended General Fund budget totals **\$47,757,536**, representing an increase of approximately **\$2.62 million** over the current FY 2026 budget of **\$45.13 million** (as of May 4, 2026).

The proposed budget includes:

- A 3% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for employees, totaling \$738,687.
- Funding for overtime in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Law Enforcement.
- Three new full-time positions: one Detention Officer I, one Planner, and one Tax Appraiser.
- Local matching funds for two economic development grants (total \$300,000):
 - Highway 1 Industrial Site (\$200,000)
 - Triangle North Warren Industrial Site (\$100,000)
- Capital equipment purchases, including (total \$598,044):
 - Six new vehicles and equipment for the Sheriff's Office
 - One EMS remount unit
 - Replacement vehicles for Soil and Water Conservation and Parks and Recreation
- Capital improvement projects, including (\$261,550):
 - Courthouse maintenance
 - Information Technology infrastructure upgrades (server replacement and DSS cabling)



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County Manager's FY'27 Budget Message

The Warren County Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan were both referenced and considered throughout the budget development process.

Key Capital and Strategic Initiatives:

- Farmers Market (under construction; completion expected August 2026) – \$3 million
- Vance-Granville Community College Transportation Hub (Triangle North; funding under consideration)
- New Public Elementary School to address facility needs and improve teacher retention (County contribution up to \$7.1 million)
- Senior Center to support wellness and engagement for the aging population (estimated \$13 million)
- EMS Station #4 to enhance emergency response times (estimated \$1.4 million)

These initiatives have been carefully planned to align with current financial conditions and future growth expectations through prudent forecasting, operational efficiency, and strategic resource allocation.

The proposed budget maintains essential services, supports our workforce, and establishes a sustainable foundation for future generations.

I look forward to working with the Board of Commissioners and our community as we continue building a stronger, more resilient, and more connected Warren County.

Respectfully submitted,

Crystal H. Smith
County Manager



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- Replacement of a wooden walkway with concrete at the Parks and Recreation Complex
- New debt service obligations for four projects (\$1,261,333):
 - Farmers Market: \$320,000
 - Senior Center (interest payment): \$520,000
 - EMS Station #4 (principal and interest): \$141,333
 - New Elementary School: \$280,000
- Increased funding (\$611,000) for Warren County Schools' current expenses, including teacher supplements
- Opioid settlement funding of up to \$140,000 to support four strategies and one part-time position
- Public Utilities funding of \$6.01 million, compared to \$5.43 million in FY 2026, driven in part by increased water purchase costs from the Kerr Lake Regional Water System (rising from \$2.64 to \$3.96 per thousand gallons, a 50% increase)

Utility Rate Recommendations:

- Water: Maintain a \$30 base rate; increase volumetric rate from \$6.50 to \$7.00 per thousand gallons
- Sewer: Increase base rate from \$15 to \$30; increase volumetric rate from \$6.50 to \$10.00 per thousand gallons

Public Works and Fire Protection:

- Public Works funding is recommended at \$2.04 million, comparable to \$2.06 million in FY 2026
- Proposed increases:
 - Tipping fee: \$75 to \$80 per ton
 - Household solid waste fee: \$150 to \$175 annually
- Fire Protection Fund (Fund 22) is recommended at \$1,945,936, an increase of \$75,621

Service and Position Reductions:

- Elimination of Home Health Services due to reduced caseloads and availability of private-sector providers (savings of \$309,333)
- Elimination of the following positions:
 - Home Health: RN Clinical Nurse, CNA, Billing Clerk, and Program Assistant/Office Manager
 - Grants and Contracts Administrator (savings of \$79,700 in salary and benefits)

A. FY27 Proposed Budget

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS - REGULAR BOARD MEETING

1. Barbara Espinosa spoke about Senate Bill 214 Section 5. Ms. Espinosa stated she was grateful to the Board members, staff, and citizens that went to the Capital to help stop SB214 Section 5.
2. Scott Murray asked the Commissioners to deny the requested text amendments to the Solar Ordinance.
3. Tyrone Melton stated there was a fire at Soul City Volunteer Fire Department and thanked all of the Volunteer Fire Departments that responded.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes of April 6, 2026 Regular Meeting

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the minutes of the April 6, 2026 Regular Meeting were approved.

B. Tax Collector's Report for March 2026 Presented for Board's Information in Accordance with NCGS 105-350

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Tax Collector's Report for March 2026 was approved.

C. Tax Release Requests (Over/Under \$100)in Accordance with NCGS 105-381 "Tax Payer's Remedies" for Information Only

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Tax Release Requests were approved.

D. Adoption of Proclamation Declaring May 3 - 9, 2026 as Clerk to the County Board of Commissioners Week

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Proclamation Declaring May 3 - 9, 2026 as Clerks to County Board of Commissioners Week was approved.

E. Adoption of Proclamation Declaring May 17-24, 2026 as Emergency Medical Service Week

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Proclamation Declaring May 17 - 24, 2026 as Emergency Medical Service Week was approved.

6. COUNTY MANAGER'S UPDATE – Crystal Smith

A. Farmers Market Update

County Manager Crystal Smith stated that the Board of Commissioners are invited to tour the Farmers Market area to see the progress that has been made on June 2, 2026 at 12:00 p.m.

B. Report on County Government Month Activities

County Manager Crystal Smith reported that, during the month of April, we recognized County Government Month by highlighting different departments each day on social media. On April 30th, county employees were treated to desserts from Brain Freeze. Smith thanked Clerk to the Board Paula Pulley for taking the lead on County Government Month activities.

7. ACTION ITEMS

A. Consider Approval of Activation of Administrative Assistant Position and Retention of Two Customer Service Positions in Public Utilities - Human Resources Director Lottie Terry

On motion of Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the activation of Administrative Assistant Position and retention of two Customer Service positions in Public Utilities was approved.

B. Consider Action on Text Amendments to Solar Farm Ordinance - Planning and Zoning Director Mark Bloomer

On motion of Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Davis, and discussion concerning state regulations on size and restrictions on solar farms, the Planning Board's recommendation to deny the proposed changes to the Solar Ordinance and adoption of the consistency statement which says the proposed changes are inconsistent with the Warren County Comprehensive Land Use Plan was accepted by unanimous vote.

C. Consider Approval of Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Mini-Grant Policy - TDA Manager Cherie Nielsen

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Mini-Grant Policy was approved.

D. Consider Approval of Resolution by Warren County Board of Commissioners Authorizing Execution of Opioid Settlements with Six Remnant Defendants - Assitant County Manager Matt Garner

On motion of Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Resolution by Warren County Board of Commissioners Authorizing Execution of Opioid Settlements with Six remnant Defendants was approved.

E. Consider Acceptance of NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Great Trails Grant for Buck Springs Park in the Amount of \$100,000 with a County Match of \$25,000 and Authorize County Manager to Execute Documents - Grants and Contracts Coordinator Connie Calloway

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Great Trails Grant for Buck Springs Park in the amount of \$100,000 with a county match of \$25,000 was approved and County Manager was authorized to execute documents associated.

F. Consider Approval of Resolution of the Warren County Board of Commissioners Opposing Modifications to County Property Tax Authority

On motion of Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the Resolution of the Warren County Board of Commissioners Opposing Modifications to the County Property Tax Authority was approved.

G. Consider Approval of Agreement Between Warren County and True Mountain Holdings, LLC to Identify, Source, and Close on Additional Financing for Warren County Schools New Elementary School Construction Project with No Upfront Cost and True Mountain Holdings, LLC Earning 2.5% of the Total Allocation to be Paid at Closing of Additional Financing - County Manager Crystal Smith

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, and duly carried by unanimous vote, agreement between Warren County and True Mountain Holdings, LLC to identify, source, and close on additional financing for Warren County Schools New Elementary School Construction Project was approved.

8. BOARDS/COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS

A. Consider Appointment of Corei Somerville to the Community & Economic Development Commission for a First Three-Year Term Beginning May 2026 and Ending April 2029

On motion of Commissioner Hunt, seconded by Commissioner Baker, and duly carried by unanimous vote, Corei Somerville was appointed to a first three-year term on the Community & Economic Development Commissioner beginning May 2026 and ending April 2029.

**B. Consider Appointment of Paul Mella (District 2) to a First Three-Year Term as Secondary Alternate to the Planning Board Beginning May 2026 and Ending April 2029
Statements of Interest were also received from Erika Horton (District 1) and Joe Zeno (District 2)**

On motion of Commissioner Baker, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, and duly carried by unanimous vote, Paul Mella was appointed to a first three-year term as Secondary Alternate on the Planning Board beginning May 2026 and ending April 2029.

C. Consider Approval of Re-Appointment of Howard Epps to a 2nd Two-Year Term and Appointment of Janet Perkins to 1st Two-Year Term as Members At-Large; and Appointment of Kanika Turrentine Weeks to 1st Two-Year Term as Non-Profit Agency Representative on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) with Terms Ending January 31, 2028.

On motion of Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Hunt, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the re-appointment of Howard Epps to a second two-year term, and appointment of Janet Perkins to a first two-year term as Members-at-Large, and appointment of Kanika Turrentine Weeks to a first two-year term as Non-Profit Agency Representative on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council with terms ending January 31, 2028 were approved.

9. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' UPDATES

1. Commissioner Davis congratulated Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk Monique Hinton on her upcoming graduation with her MBA.
2. Commissioner Kearney Dunlap provided a list of all events and meetings she attended, stating that April was a very busy month.

3. Commissioner Hunt commended the Recreation Department for the great Opening Day event held to kick off T-Ball, Softball, and Baseball season.
4. Commissioner Baker attended many meetings and events.
5. Chairman Cooper stated he attended 17 meetings and drove 600 miles in the last month. He also expressed appreciation to the Clerk to the Board and Deputy Clerk as well as all other staff.

10. ADJOURN May 4, 2026 BOARD MEETING

On motion of Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Kearney Dunlap, and duly carried by unanimous vote, the May 4, 2026 meeting was adjourned.

Paula Pulley, Clerk to the Board