

Chowan County Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting
Wednesday, January 28, 2026
Chowan County Public Safety Center
305 West Freemason St.
Edenton, NC 27980
2:30pm

Present: Chairman Bob Kirby, Commissioners Larry McLaughlin, Ron Cummings, Ellis Lawrence, and Tony Shaffer.

Absent: Commissioners Chris Evans and Tray Taylor

Staff present County Manager Kevin Howard, Finance Officer Cathy Smith and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings.

MAPS Group Staff Present Rebecca Veazey and Richard Self.

Chair Kirby called the special meeting to order.

Presentation From MAPS Group (Management and Personnel Services)

Ms. Veazey with the MAPS Group provided the Board with a PowerPoint Presentation. A copy of the PowerPoint is in the meeting file labeled January 28, 2026.

The PowerPoint detailed services are available to Counties by the MAPS Group and a list of some clients that have been served by MAPS. It was noted that the MAPS Group has provided Chowan with a Classification and Pay Study. She noted the following are identified in the study:

Classification

Rank Jobs based on degree of difficulty/responsibility
Identify best title
Write or update job description
Study the jobs not the people

Pay Plan

identify a competitive salary range
based on the duties and market data

It was noted that a Classification and Pay Plan is done to assist with recruitment and retention of employees, to maintain internal equity, ensure equal pay for equal work, and maximize cost effectiveness. It was noted this is done because jobs change because of new technology and regulations as well as new services or reorganizations. It addresses market changes that are not addressed by cost-of-living adjustments (COLA). The study updates the position classification as well as the salary range and a study is done about every five years.

Ms. Veazey reviewed the steps in the study which included employees completing questionnaires, interviews with employees, their supervisors and Administration. She noted the report has been written and finalized and is being submitted to the Board at this meeting.

Ms. Veazey noted that when considering the position classification, the following factors are not considered:

- Volume of work
- Length of service
- Qualifications
- Work performance

The following items are factors considered when reviewing position classification:

- Difficulty/complexity and variety of work
- Public contact
- Education and Experience Requirements
- Work Environment and Hazards
- Physical Effort
- Supervision Given
- Supervision Received

Ms. Veazy reviewed the four major compensation system components which are:

- Class and Range Revisions
 - o Jobs Change (Reorganizations, new services, new technology, new regulations)
 - o Market changes at different rates for different jobs
 - o Study updates classifications and market
- Annual Market Adjustment (COLA)
 - o COLA includes Consumer Price Index (CPI), cost of living in the local area.
 - o Moves hiring rate and maximum so the plan stays competitive
 - o Helps avoid the cost of turnover
- Range Movement (Performance/Merit Pay or other)
 - o Purpose is to reward high performance and move salaries across the range.
 - o More local jurisdictions emphasize pay for performance
 - o More emphasis on valid performance evaluation, training supervisors and focusing on improvement
- Longevity Pay
 - o Rewards and recognizes employee length of service

Ms. Veazy and Mr. Self then presented the Board with the copies of the Human Resources Study document. She noted that the document provides the Board with 5 options for implementation of the study. The cover letter of the document notes the following items are included in the study:

- Organization Charts
- Report Summary by department
- Analysis of competitive salary data
- Allocation of full-time classifications to salary grades
- Proposed salary schedule
- Implementation strategy with associated costs
- Recommended FSLA status
- Management Recommendations
- Benefits survey

- Electronic Employment Application form for online completion
- Recommended updated Personnel Policy
- Class Specifications for each proposed class.
- Updated job descriptions

Ms. Veazy noted that pages 5 through 25 of the report provide a summary of the positions within the study. She noted that page 27 of the study provides the recommended market range of 50% for Chowan County in comparison to neighboring counties such as Bertie (51%), Currituck (50%), Gates (55%), Pasquotank (41%), Perquimans (51%), Washington (37%) and the Town of Edenton (50%).

It was noted that the following Towns and Counties were considered when compiling the study

- Bertie County
- Camden County
- Currituck County
- Gates County
- Hyde County
- Pasquotank County
- Perquimans County
- Washington County
- Town of Edenton

It was noted that many positions within the County are specialized in County Government Services and cannot be compared with the private sector.

Ms. Veazy reviewed the suggested salary schedule and grade with hiring rates, minimum salary, midpoint salary and maximum salary. It was noted that a salary schedule was in place for many years but has not been utilized in Chowan County

Ms. Veazy noted that Chowan currently has a significant problem with compression. She noted that this is the grouping of salaries in the beginning portions of the range. She noted this could be new employees receiving salary amounts very close to that received by longer term employees and can create morale and motivation problems which lead to turnover. She noted that compression also makes it more difficult to use the range to hire more experienced new employees above entry because new employees would come in making more than long term similarly qualified employees.

The following plan implementation strategy options were provided:

Option 1 (To Market)

Employee salaries are placed in the range at least at the probation completion level (Minimum). In addition, employees are placed above the Minimum based on length of time with the County at the rate of 1.5% per year of service. For example, an employee with the County for five years would be placed at 7.5% above the Minimum, ten years at 15% above minimum, etc. In cases where employees have been promoted, they are given half credit for total time with the County, and half credit for time in promoted positions (blended service). This option is very conservative because an employee would have to have been with the County for 30 years to be placed at the top of the range. This option also helps address the County's compression problem

Annual cost to implement \$860,152
Cost as a percentage to payroll 11.5%

Option 2 (Phase In)

This option changes the Preferred Option by using 1 % per year of blended service rather than 1.5%. This option is very conservative because an employee would have to have been with the County for 45 years to be placed at the top of the range. This option also helps address the County's compression problem.

Annual cost to implement \$656,524
Cost as a percentage to payroll 9.1%

Option 3 (Phase In)

This option changes the Preferred Option by:

- 1) Lowering the salary ranges to 98% of market, and
- 2) Using 1 % instead of 1.5% per year of blended service.

Annual cost to implement \$601,169
Cost as a percentage to payroll 8.4%

Option 4 (Phase In)

This option changes the Preferred Option by:

- 1) Lowering the salary ranges to 96% of market, and
- 2) Using 1 % below midpoint and 0.75% above midpoint instead of 1.5% per year of blended service

Annual cost to implement \$461,549
Cost as a percentage to payroll 6.5%

Option 5 (Phase In)

This option changes the Preferred Option by:

- 1) Lowering the salary ranges to 96% of market, and
- 2) Using 0.75% per year of service.

Annual cost to implement \$406,333
Cost as a percentage to payroll 5.8%

Ms. Veazy noted that additional options may be calculated if desired.

It is important to note that some portion (66% ?) of the cost for implementation of the DSS positions will be paid by the state.

Ms. Veazy made the following Special Notes:

1. The costs represented in the option above are estimates based on payroll in July 2025. Implementation January 1 would decrease the cost by half for the current fiscal year. Also, costs will change with turnover. It also does not include fringe benefits costs associated with payroll.

2. Recommend that the Board delegate authority to the County Manager to make adjustments in the implementation salaries of employees where necessary such as a) to withhold increases where employees have documented disciplinary actions; and b) to make adjustments where implementation strategies create internal equity problems.
3. These recommendations are based on data collected in November of this 2025. In July of 2026, most of these organizations will adjust their ranges by some percentage to reflect cost of living and Chowan County will need to do this as well to remain competitive. However, organizations who implement studies in July often delay the COLA to the following January to spread out costs.
4. Classification implementation pay adjustment are, in essence, one time "catch ups". They do not take the place of market adjustments (COLA), promotional, career development, certification or merit/performance pay increases.

Ms. Veazy noted the study includes a benefits analysis as well as an updated Personnel Policy.

The Board discussed the study and expressed concerns regarding full implementation of the study. It was noted that the Board is also in the process of a revaluation and this will have to be considered during the budget process to determine what can be done. Board members discussed concerns over longevity pay as well as performance-based pay. It was noted that performance evaluations would also be updated to best evaluate performance

It was noted that Option 1 would equal a 4-cent tax increase, Option 2 is 3 cents and option 3 is 2 cents.

It was determined that no decision could be made by the Commissioners until budget time is closer when all budgetary needs and requirements are considered. The Board noted that as they get closer to budget time, the Board will consider this plan along with other County needs and prioritize from there.

Adjourn

Being no further business, Commissioner Shaffer moved that the meeting be adjourned. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Bob Kirby, Chairman

Susanne Stallings, Clerk