

**Chowan County Board of Commissioners**

**Regular Meeting**

**Monday, January 5, 2026**

**Chowan County Public Safety Center**

**305 West Freemason St.**

**Edenton, NC 27980**

**6:00pm**

*This meeting was recorded. A copy of the recording is in the clerk's server meeting file labeled January 5, 2026.*

Present: Vice Chairman Larry McLaughlin, Commissioners, Ron Cummings, Ellis Lawrence, Chris Evans, Tray Taylor and Tony Shaffer.

Absent: Chairman Bob Kirby

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

**Regular Meeting**

Vice Chairman McLaughlin called the regular meeting to order and led the pledge.

Commissioner Cummings then offered the invocation.

**Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Cummings moved to approve the agenda as presented.

Vice Chairman McLaughlin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

**Public Comment**

Vice Chairman McLaughlin opened the floor for public comment.

Librarian Anna Kallis with the Shepard Pruden Memorial Library introduced herself to the Board of Commissioners as the recently appointed Librarian. She stated she looked forward to working with the Board in the future.

Vice Chairman McLaughlin called for any further public comment, there was none.

**Consent Agenda**

*All items on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and may be enacted by one motion. If a County Commissioner requests discussion on an item, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered separate*

- a. Minutes  
Minutes of the November 3, 2025, November 17, 2025, and the December 1, 2025 Meetings.

b. NCACC Seminar

Commissioner Shaffer requested after the December meeting for approval to attend the NCACC Leading Your County Board seminar in Guilford County on January 8, 2025. It is recommended that the Board approve the expenditure.

Commissioner Lawrence moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Vice Chair McLaughlin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

**Elections Annual Report**

Elections Director Kristi Nixon provided the Board with the annual report from the Elections Office. A copy of the presentation is in the meeting file labeled January 5, 2026.

**LEPC Grant Application**

Emergency Management Coordinator Cord Palmer provided the Board with a request from the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to apply for \$10,000 in grant funds from North Carolina Emergency Management to update the 2017 railroad maps. There is no required grant match.

Board members discussed means for identification of hazardous materials transported by rail.

Mr. Palmer explained that typically the cars are labeled to be identified if materials are considered hazardous.

Commissioner Shaffer moved to approve the grant application as presented. Vice Chair McLaughlin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

**Appointments**

Chowan County Board of Adjustment

Vice Chairman McLaughlin noted that it is recommended that the Board reappoint Shelli Simmons to the Chowan County Board of Adjustment.

Commissioner Taylor moved to reappoint Shelli Simmons to the Board of Adjustment. Vice Chairman McLaughlin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Chowan County Planning Board

Vice Chair McLaughlin noted that it is recommended that the Board reappoint Mike Williams to the Chowan County Planning Board.

Commissioner Cummings moved to reappoint Mike Williams to the County Planning Board. Vice Chairman McLaughlin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Chowan County Tourism Development Authority (TDA)

Vice Chair McLaughlin noted that the following appointments and reappointments are recommended for the TDA Board.

- Reappointment of Amber Hardy – Seat 4 (Promotion)
- Reappointment of Bryan Bunn – Seat 2 (Accommodation)

- Appointment of Timmy Turner – Seat 8 (Promotion)
- Appointment of Karen Thurman – Seat 1 (Accommodation)

Commissioner Evans moved to approve the appointments of Karen Thurman and Timmy Turner as well as the Reappointments of Bryan Bunn and Amber Hardy to the TDA Board. Vice Chairman McLaughlin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

**Financial Items**

Finance Officer Cathy Smith presented the following:

Current Fiscal Year Budget Amendments

BA2026-033

Account Number	Account Description	Revenue (Inc+/Dec-)	Expense (Inc+/Dec-)
<b><i>Opioid Fund</i></b>			
28-3990-990-00	Fund Balance Appropriated	30,000.00	
28-4370-121-00	PORT - Salaries		22,222.00
28-4370-181-00	PORT - Fica		1,700.00
28-4370-182-00	PORT - Retirement		3,244.00
28-4370-183-00	PORT - Hospitalization		2,834.00
	Balanced	30,000.00	30,000.00
<b>Justification:</b>			
<i>To amend the 2026 budget for Opioid Settlement Funds to include salaries and benefits for PORT program. BOCC authorized funding of PORT program on 11/17/25.</i>			

BA2026-034

Account Number	Account Description	Revenue (Inc+/Dec-)	Expense (Inc+/Dec-)
<b>Register of Deeds</b>			
11-3418-415-00	*Preservation/Automation	634.97	
11-4180-298-00	*Dept Supplies - Auto/Pres		211.66
11-4180-440-00	*Contr Svcs - Automation/Pres		211.66
11-4180-511-00	*C/O - Auto / Pres		211.65
<b>Sheriff's Office</b>			
11-3431-232-00	*Sheriff Donations	250.00	
11-4317-440-00	*Donation - Expense		250.00
11-3431-243-00	*KIDS & COPS	1,000.00	
11-4317-443-00	*KIDS & COPS Expense		1,000.00
<b>Animal Shelter</b>			
11-3438-894-00	*Donations - Chowan	434.00	
11-3438-894-01	*Donations - Gates	95.70	
11-3438-894-02	*Donations - Perquimans	1,740.32	
11-3438-894-03	*Donations - Other	195.00	
11-4381-600-00	*Donation - Expense		2,465.02
11-3438-895-00	*Adoption - Chowan	695.45	
11-3438-895-01	*Adoption - Gates	430.96	
11-3438-895-02	*Adoption - Perquimans	810.22	
11-3438-895-03	*Adoption - Other	1,765.90	
11-4381-441-00	*Contr Svcs - Spay/Neuter		3,702.53
<b>Cooperative Ext:</b>			
11-3495-370-00	*AG Program Fees Discretionary	30.00	
11-4953-440-00	*Ag Program Fees Discretionary		30.00
11-3495-378-00	*4-H Fees Discretionary	4,599.00	
11-4953-448-00	*4-H Fees Discretionary		4,599.00
<b>Recreation</b>			
11-3612-487-00	*Recreation Donations	1,100.00	
11-6130-299-01	*Donations - Dept Supplies		1,100.00
11-3612-504-00	*Recreation Special Events	350.00	
11-6132-453-00	*Recreation Special Events		350.00
<b>Senior Center</b>			
11-3616-533-00	*Reg Fees - Trips	5,583.00	
11-4268-312-00	*TRIPS - Senior Citizens		5,583.00
11-3616-533-01	*Registration Fees Activities	378.00	
11-4268-299-01	*Activities - Dept. Supplies		378.00
11-3616-535-04	*Silver Sneakers	768.00	
11-4268-352-02	*Healthways		768.00
11-3616-535-01		51.00	
11-4268-352-01	*Donations - Fitness		51.00
<b>DSS</b>			
12-3531-230-14	*DSS Special Events	235.00	
12-5310-450-00	*DSS Special Events		235.00
	Balanced	21,146.52	21,146.52
	<b>Total Discretionary Income Received FYE 2026</b>	<b>209,712.23</b>	
<b>Justification:</b>			
	<i>To amend the 2026 budget to include Discretionary income for November 2025.</i>		

Commissioner Evans moved to approve the budget amendments as presented. Vice Chairman McLaughlin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

### Financial Report

Finance Officer Cathy Smith provided the Board with financial reports for November 2025. A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled January 5, 2026.

### Update on JA Holmes Highschool Project Expenses

Finance Officer Cathy Smith provided the Board with high school project expenditure report. A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled January 5, 2026.

### External Board/Committee Report

#### Maritime Program

Commissioner Shaffer reported that he just attended a function in Newport News where the US Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth was in attendance. He stated that while at the event he learned of funding available for naval education with regards to ship building. He stated he is looking into creation of a local task force to apply for these funds to benefit the local community college and high school. He noted that while much of this funding is specific to the Newport News region near the naval bases, there was support for North Carolina schools to obtain these funds as well.

#### COA

Commissioner Lawrence reported on the COA Board and encouraged the Board members to check out the nursing program. He added that with regards to local contributions, Chowan County is meeting the expected funding need.

### Manager's Report

#### Animal Shelter

Mr. Howard noted that a new shelter director has been hired, Betty Copeland. He noted that due to staffing issues the shelter has operated on reduced hours but they are addressing the need and should be back to normal operational hours soon.

#### Employee Recognition and Appreciation Luncheon

Mr. Howard thanked the Board for their support of the event and stated that employees were appreciative of the luncheon.

#### Planning Retreat

Mr. Howard stated that more information will be coming about the annual Commissioner retreat which will be held in late February or early March.

### Timely and Important Matters

There were none.

**Adjourn**

Being no further business, Commissioner Cummings moved that the meeting be adjourned. Vice Chair McLaughlin asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

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Larry McLaughlin, Vice Chair

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Susanne Stallings, Clerk