

Mayor

Doris Underwood

Commissioners

Christopher Carlson

Edward Lowery Jr.

Daniel McColl

Tony McVickers

Benjamin Mahaffey

Attorney

Sarah Price



Town Clerk/Finance Officer

Raymie Day

Utility Clerk

Lana Penfield

Interim Chief of Police

John Micheals

Public Works Director

Joe Penfield

Code Enforcement Officer

Tina Odom

MEETING MINUTES May 6th, 2025

Called to order by Mayor Underwood 7:01PM

Invocation by Danny McColl

Pledge of allegiance led by Mayor Underwood

Approval of meeting minutes for April 15th, 2025 were approved by the board

The following members of the board of commissioners were present:

Mayor Underwood

Commissioner Carlson

Commissioner Lowery

Commissioner Mahaffey

Commissioner McColl

The following members of the board of commissioners were not present:

Commissioner McVickers

Mayor Underwood called for the approval of the minutes from April 15th, 2025 and April 29th, 2025.

Commissioner Carlson made the motion for approval and Commissioner Mahaffey seconded and the motion carried.

Overview

- **Property Purchase Issues:** Discussion on the 2019 property offer, document gaps, and ownership verification (**Dr. Locklear/Lumber River Leasing**).
- **EMS & Infrastructure:** Update on EMS building use, county meetings, and potential grant opportunities.
- **Road & Ordinance Discussions:** A motion was made by Commissioner McColl to not take over the roads in Freedom/Cardinal subdivisions. Commissioner Lowery 2nd the motion. All present board members were in favor.
- **Fire Ordinance:** Debate over fire ordinance amendments (burn barrels/fire pits).
- **Law Enforcement & Grants:** Review of police statistics, justice grant opportunities (deadline **June 11**), and recruitment updates.
- **July 4th Event Planning:** Parade route updates, vendor coordination led by **Lana**, and volunteer calls.
- **Cemetery & Sewer Concerns:** Discussion on cemetery maintenance and sewer rerouting issues raised by property owner **Hugh Zimmerman**.
- **ETJ & Election Update:** Clarification on ETJ process and announcement of upcoming board election opportunities.
- **Healthcare Initiative:** **Dasha Thompson** presents a nonprofit plan for local healthcare and seeks a community location.

Property Acquisition Issues

- **Historical Context:** Minutes from March 5, 2019, recorded discussions by Mayor McMillan about purchasing the Dr. Locklear property. This item of business has been repeatedly discussed over the course of, at a minimum, 6 years with no final decisions from the board.
 - o An offer to purchase at \$80,000 was prepared by the town attorney but never signed by either party.
- **Ownership Concerns:** Uncertainty exists between whether the property is owned by **Dr. Locklear** or **Lumber River Leasing**.

May 6, 2026

Re:

Page 2

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- o Emphasis was placed on obtaining valid proof of ownership to avoid a void deed as well as a plan for the land lot if it is purchased.
 - **Next Steps:** A suggestion was made to re-vote and officially document the offer of \$80,000. Commissioner Carlson stated this item has already been voted on and approved. He will locate the documentation of that meeting. Attorney Price stated the item had already been voted on and has her handwritten notes to provide documentation. Attorney Price located the prepared contract and stated it was never signed nor delivered.
 - **Conclusion:** This item of business has been tabled until all board members are present.

EMS Building

- **Meeting Insights:** Tina relayed notes from an April 30th, 2025 meeting with county officials (Shelton Hill and Patrick Cummings).
 - o According to Mr. Hill and Mr. Cummings the EMS building will not be offered for sale but the offered the use of 1 bay to the town. was offered to be shared.
 - o Mr. Hill and Mr. Cummings stressed the need of the EMS building as a satellite station due to the growing service needs in the Parkton area.
- **Grant Opportunities:** Discussion included utilizing Robeson County's grant administrator for shovel-ready projects so that the town can build what they need.
- **Future Consultations:** Plans were mentioned regarding the upkeep of the building appearance.

Road Takeover and Ordinance Amendments

- A motion was passed to not assume control over roads in the Freedom/Cardinal subdivision.

Fire Ordinance

- **Debate:** Participants deliberated on fire safety language, particularly whether burn barrels should be permitted.
 - o The group discussed amending the ordinance to explicitly allow burn barrels (with a safety screen) under defined conditions.
 - o There is a call to ensure that all votes and minutes are properly recorded.

Public Works

- **Generator:** Will be shipped on May 27th.
- **Clean up:** Maintenance conducted clean up at the Taylor St. curve to include trees and debris.
- **Account activity**
 - o 11 new accounts
 - o 16 accounts approached the cutoff in the month of April
 - After warning phone calls only 5 cutoff were performed
 - 2 accounts are still cutoff to include 1 reoccurring account and 1 that has moved away

Law Enforcement/Police

- **Activity**
 - o 17 traffic stops (speeding, no registration, no insurance etc)
 - 12 citations
 - 5 warning
 - o 2 motor vehicle accidents
 - o 2 alarm calls
 - o 1 disorderly conduct
 - o 1 domestic dispute
 - o 1 overdose
 - o 1 health and welfare
 - o 1 vandalism
- **Operational Updates:** The meeting reviewed recent police statistics including traffic stops, citations, and various incidents.

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- **Recruitment & Training:** Efforts continue with recruiting part-time officers and participants from programs after candidates have completed the training.
 - **Police Administrative Matters:** Chief Micheals informed the board of his upcoming military training (25 May – 15 June) and a deployment to Fort Hood (leaving 1 Aug for approximately 9 months).

Administrative

- **Retirement Concerns:** The issue of non-compliance with the state retirement system for employees was raised. Raymie informed that board that the town will be required to follow the state mandates and add the retirement of 4 full time employees into the next fiscal year's budget. Continued updates will be given throughout the setup process.

Public Comments

- **Justice Grant**
 - **Law Enforcement Grant:** Mr. Estrada informs the board about a grant to help the police department. Discussion highlighted an opportunity to secure state-funded law enforcement equipment (fiber radios, cameras, mobile data terminals) with a reimbursement process. Chief Michaels will be doing research on the grant.
- **July 4th Parade and Community Event Planning**
 - **Event Coordination:** Dixie Mabe provided detailed updates on the parade route, road blockings, and vendor map arrangements.
 - **Vendor Coordination:** Lana has been tasked with managing vendor applications.
 - A call for additional volunteers was made especially for set up and break down of the vendor portion of the event.
 - The event planning involves collaboration with the police and Chief Nowak of the fire department.
- **Cemetery Maintenance and Sewer Issues**
 - **Cemetery Concerns:** Mrs. Edwards expressed her concern over the neglected state of the cemetery. She asked what measures can be taken to ensure that the cemetery will be cared for.
 - Mayor Underwood assured Mrs. Edwards that the portion on the cemetery owned by the town is properly maintained and that the privately owned portion is on the families of the deceased to maintain. Town funds cannot be used to maintain that privately owned sections of the cemetery.
- **Sewer**
 - **Sewer Rerouting Testimony:** Hugh Zimmerman testified about his dissatisfaction with a document disavowing liability, insisting on rerouting his sewer to avoid financial burdens.
 - He emphasized signing documents under duress due to the lack of support for property damage claims.
 - Lana expressed that Mr. Honeycutt (McGill Associates PA) stated in the letter that there is a normal plumbing warranty.
- **Healthcare Initiative and Nonprofit Proposal**
 - **Presentation:** Dayja Thompson (a local nurse) outlined her plan to launch a healthcare initiative focused on youth empowerment, community health education, and long-term care.
 - **Location Need:** The proposal calls for utilizing the Rurlton building as a community hub, and she requested assistance to establish contact with Mr. Finley.
 - The initiative aims to fill a gap in local healthcare services across the region.

ETJ Process and Board

- **ETJ Discussion:** The process for transitioning to the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) was reviewed, with plans for Sarah to contact the county attorney for clarification.

May 6, 2026

Re:

Page 4

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- **Legislative Watch:** Tina mentioned the possibility of pending legislation that could alter ETJ parameters.

Election Updates

- **Election Notice:** Commissioner Carlson stated that the upcoming board election was announced, with an invitation for new candidates to volunteer for service. Dates to get on the ballot are July 7th – July 18th.

Healthcare Initiative and Nonprofit Proposal

- **Presentation:** Dayja Thompson (a local nurse) outlined her plan to launch a healthcare initiative focused on youth empowerment, community health education, and long-term care.
- **Location Need:** The proposal calls for utilizing the Rurritan building as a community hub, and she requested assistance to establish contact with Mr. Finley.
 - o The initiative aims to fill a gap in local healthcare services across the region.

Action Items

- **Town Attorney (Sarah):** Prepare and properly document the offer to purchase, ensuring valid proof of ownership before approaching Mr. Locklear. Review the ETJ guidelines and determine the next steps amid pending legislative changes.
- **Chief Micheals (Law Enforcement):** Research and compile details on the justice assisting grant for equipment, including the submission process and financial requirements.
- **Tina, Lana, and Raymie:** Email the suggested corrections for the fire ordinance amendments (specifically for burn barrels) for review prior to the next meeting.
- **Volunteers:** Contact **Lana** if you can assist with vendor setup and management for the July 4th parade.
- **Dasha Thompson:** Seek community support to connect with Mr. Finley regarding the Rurritan building for the healthcare initiative.

Adjournment – Commissioner Carlson called a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Lowery 2nd the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 7:55PM.