

Town of Spring Lake  
Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners  
Municipal Building  
300 Ruth Street  
Spring Lake, NC 28390

January 12, 2026

**MINUTES**

6:01 pm

The Town of Spring Lake Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting in the Grady Howard Conference Room of the Spring Lake Municipal Building with Mayor Kia Anthony presiding.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland  
Commissioner Tony Burgess  
Commissioner Soña L. Cooper  
Commissioner Jackie Jackson  
Commissioner Adrian Thompson

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Carly Autry, Town Clerk  
Devon Gloria, Town of Spring Lake Fire Department  
Elizabeth Gray, HR Manager  
Lakeshia Hardy, Revenue Collection Specialist  
Stephanie Hutchins, Building Inspector  
Police Chief Errol Jarman, Town of Spring Lake Police Department  
James Overton, Finance Director  
Captain Timothy Patterson, Town of Spring Lake Fire Department  
Michael Porter, Town Attorney  
Evelyn Robinson, Accounts Payable  
Renee Robinson, Revenue Supervisor  
Jon Rorie, Town Manager  
Deanna Rosario, Water Resources Manager  
Lieutenant Danny Sutton, Town of Spring Lake Police Department  
Detective Keshore Taylor, Town of Spring Lake Police Department  
Lieutenant Gregory Wilkerson, Town of Spring Lake Police Department  
Fire Chief Jason Williams, Town of Spring Lake Fire Department

Before calling the meeting to order, Mayor Anthony requested a moment of silence for a Town of Spring Lake employee, Asia Calloway, who passed away due to a tragic car crash. Mrs. Calloway had served the Town for about a year and a half in the Water Department and was recently transferred to the front desk as a Program Assistant within the Administration Department. She had been pursuing a pathway to work with building, permitting, zoning, and planning.

Mayor Anthony welcomed Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland, Commissioner Jackie Jackson, and Commissioner Tony Burgess.

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Anthony declared a quorum and called the meeting to order.

## **2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Evangelist Bettye Sanford gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **3. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS**

Commissioner Jackson requested to add Closed Session Pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11 (a)(6) – Personnel and Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland requested to delete, under New Business, agenda item 9d. Discussion Regarding Board Compensation, as well as deleting Commissioner Jackson as a speaker, and replacing with Discussion Regarding Future Agenda Preparation.

## **4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Action:** Motion to approve the January 12, 2026, Regular Meeting agenda with the additions and deletion.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Second by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Vote:** Unanimous

## **5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS**

**Action:** Motion to approve draft minutes of December 8, 2025, Organizational Meeting, Budget Amendment (BA-9) FY2026, Board Liaison Assignments to Town Committees, Community Appearance and Sustainability Committee Application – Appoint Raul Palacios, and Minimum Housing Appeals Board Application – Appoint Jason Datray (Alternate).

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland

**Second by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Vote:** Unanimous

## **6. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Raul Palacios, Spring Lake resident, announced the launch of a recovery group in Spring Lake starting the following Monday at 6 pm. The group would offer weekly meetings with free meals for individuals facing issues such as anger, addiction, alcoholism, pornography, gambling, overspending, overeating, and PTSD.

Regina Thompson-Xadu, Spring Lake resident, spoke about the need for follow-up on public comments, suggesting some system should be implemented where people who make comments can receive follow-up via email, phone call, or something on the website.

Deidra Parker, Spring Lake resident, raised concerns about squatters in the Town, explaining that vacant homes were being broken into, with copper and possessions being removed. She requested action to address this issue.

Debra Clyde, Spring Lake resident, provided comments via email and was read by the Town Clerk. A copy of her comments is attached as **ATTACHMENT ONE**.

Frank Alexander, Spring Lake resident, spoke about two (2) issues: taxes and industrial development. He urged the Board to consider lowering the mill rate, noting that the County had reduced theirs to 49.9 while Spring Lake remained at 74.1. He advocated for industrial development in the Town to broaden the tax base and bring jobs beyond retail. He suggested that the Town could attract companies looking to relocate from states with high taxes, and proposed forming a committee to work with local military facilities to identify potential industries that would support their logistics needs.

Steve Watson, Spring Lake resident, spoke about speed bumps, mentioning that he had spoken with the Police Chief about implementing them. He clarified that the debate wasn't whether they were a good idea but how to get them installed, and offered to work with the Town to improve community safety.

Henry Ponder, Spring Lake resident, raised several concerns regarding Town services and taxes. He inquired about the 17% water rate increase from January 2025 and requested information. He questioned recent tax increases, asking what the additional revenue is funding, specifically whether it supports fire services, equipment, or infrastructure, and expressed concern that the fire station and equipment do not appear to be fully utilized at the Manchester location. Mr. Ponder also discussed solid waste and recycling services, noting that his trash and recycling are collected in the same truck, and asked whether the Town has and manages a recycling contract and how it is funded. He suggested that if recycling services are not being properly provided, refuse taxes should be reduced accordingly.

Bettye Sanford, Spring Lake resident, addressed several community concerns. She emphasized the need for road repairs, including clearer markings and improved visibility of speed bumps, noting potential vehicle damage. She also raised concerns about homelessness in the community and asked whether the Town could provide assistance, such as food support or exploring alternative housing options like small homes. Ms. Sanford encouraged greater participation by Town officials and public safety leadership in community events, citing the recent Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast. Lastly, she expressed concern about a recent staff departure regarding the termination of a long-term employee, and encouraged the Town to review such matters.

Brenee Orozco introduced herself as a resident of Cumberland County and practicing Attorney who was running for Cumberland County District Court Judge. She emphasized her commitment to providing fairness, impartiality, and integrity, if elected, stating that it wasn't about her but about the citizens.

## **7. PRESENTATIONS**

None.

## **8. PUBLIC HEARING**

- a. 1523 N. Bragg Blvd. – Patrick Hosford, Civil Analyst, Kimley-Horn – Mr. Hosford presented on behalf his client, Impeccable Development. They were requesting to annex 1523 N. Bragg Blvd. into the Town of Spring Lake jurisdiction for a commercial development at the intersection of N. Bragg Blvd. and Manchester Road.

The development would include a gas station/convenience store with 41 parking spaces, a quick-service restaurant, and potentially a bank. The plan also included a stormwater management system with a wet pond. Mr. Hosford explained that in order to move forward with permitting, they needed to annex the parcel, and in the future, they planned to redefine that parcel with the other seven (7) parcels shown on the annexation map provided.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland asked whether the Town has sufficient water capacity to serve the proposed annexation, noting that prior discussions referenced infrastructure concerns and the need for additional water supply to the Town.

Mr. Rorie confirmed that adequate water capacity is available. He explained that the Town purchases water from PWC rather than producing its own supply and pays based on usage per thousand gallons. He further noted that while capacity is available through PWC, the Town's long-term purchase agreement will need to be updated.

Mayor Anthony opened the Public Hearing for **1523 N. Bragg Blvd.**

Mayor Anthony three (3) times called for any persons in favor regarding **1523 N. Bragg Blvd.**, which there were none.

Mayor Anthony three (3) times called for any persons in opposition regarding **1523 N. Bragg Blvd.**, which there were none.

The Public Hearing was closed by Mayor Anthony.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Ordinance 2026-1; To Extend the Corporate Limits of the Town of Spring Lake, North Carolina and Rezoning from R-10 Residential to C(P) Planned Commercial – Mayor Kia Anthony – This Ordinance is in reference to the Public Hearing for the annexation and rezoning for 1523 N. Bragg Blvd.

**Action:** Motion to approve Ordinance 2026-1; To Extend the Corporate Limits of the Town of Spring Lake, North Carolina and Rezoning from R-10 Residential to C(P) Planned Commercial.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Second by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Vote:** Unanimous

- b. Fiscal Year Ending 2025 Address – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony delivered a detailed end-of-year address for calendar year 2025. She began by stating that 2025 was about building a foundation by focusing on the basics: planning, accountability, and protecting core services.

Mayor Anthony acknowledged that residents felt higher costs everywhere, which at the local level appeared in equipment prices, contract costs, maintaining aging infrastructure, and keeping skilled

staff. Residents also experienced a 17% increase in water rates in January 2025, which was necessary due to rising costs tied to water repairs, purchases, and system operations.

Mayor Anthony highlighted two (2) key commitments made during 2025:

- Planning rather than guessing – The strategic plan focused on major areas including safe, reliable water, sewer, and stormwater systems; revitalizing Town infrastructure; creating a safe, vibrant, and healthy community; and economic development. Impact teams led by Commissioners, staff, and community members were established to address major problems in a structured way.
- Accountability – The Town allocated \$150,000 in the Fiscal Year to complete audits for 2022 through 2025, money that couldn't be spent on other priorities.

Mayor Anthony then addressed the Spring Lake Property Acquisitions (SLPA) situation. SLPA was a non-profit formed in 2019 as an economic development vehicle to acquire property near Fort Bragg for a potential land swap. SLPA borrowed \$3.5 million from BB&T to purchase approximately 160 acres on Manchester Road, but the proposed land swap never received federal approval. The loan went into default, and SLPA didn't pay property taxes or solid waste fees for five (5) years.

The Town negotiated a settlement with Truist (successor to BB&T) to resolve the \$3.5 million debt for \$450,000. The Town purchased the defaulted note and is pursuing foreclosure proceedings to transfer the property back to Town control. One (1) parcel was sold for \$75,000, with proceeds used to pay back taxes and fees. The Budget Amendment recorded a forgiveness of \$2.9 million in debt that the Town would never have been able to pay under the original structure. Through these negotiations, the Town reduced the liability significantly and recovered control of approximately 160 acres of land.

Regarding the budget, Mayor Anthony explained that 62% of the General Fund is allocated to public safety, meaning when public safety costs rise, it affects everything else. She noted that multiple frozen and unfunded public safety positions exist not because the Town doesn't want to fill them but because it can't afford to.

With limited budget flexibility, there are only a few ways to pay for new or expanded costs: cutting something else, raising revenues through taxes, or delaying necessary work that would cost more later. Mayor Anthony addressed property tax revaluations, noting that while rising property values can be positive by reflecting growth and investment, they also lead to higher tax bills. The Town of Spring Lake already has one of the highest property tax rates in Cumberland County at 74.1 cents per \$100 valuation. While in an ideal world the Town could offset rising property values by lowering the tax rate, the financial constraints prevent this flexibility.

Mayor Anthony detailed the severe infrastructure issues facing the Town:

- The water and sewer infrastructure is 40-60 years old
- 60% of the sewer system uses outdated clay and concrete pipes
- The sewer system includes 45 miles of lines, many showing serious structural damage
- The water system spans 65 miles of lines

- Only 50% of water purchased from Fayetteville and Harnett County reaches homes/businesses; the other 50% leaks out of broken pipes
- In January 2025 alone, there were five (5) water main breaks, with one losing 3.5 million gallons of water

The engineering firm's comprehensive study estimated costs at:

- \$45-50 million for sewer system rehabilitation
- \$20-25 million for water replacement
- Total urgent infrastructure needs: \$65-75 million

Mayor Anthony explained that every dollar invested in proactive rehabilitation saves money in emergency repairs later. She reported sending a funding request letter to the State legislative delegation seeking \$85 million in state assistance (\$50 million for wastewater, \$25 million for infrastructure, and \$10 million for stormwater improvements). The Town is also pursuing Grant opportunities and has secured several infrastructure Grants totaling over \$5.5 million.

Another budget pressure has been the change in sales tax distribution, with Cumberland County switching to ad valorem distribution based on property values rather than per capita distribution based on population. This change resulted in approximately \$1,761,000 less in sales tax revenue for the Town of Spring Lake, representing about 16% of the entire General Fund budget.

Despite these challenges, Mayor Anthony highlighted progress made in 2025:

- Playground renovation at Mendoza Park
- Major upgrades to Veterans Park
- New murals throughout Main Street
- \$318,000 invested in stormwater maintenance, repairs, and capital outlay
- \$200,000 in state Grant funding committed to natural gas line expansion with Piedmont Natural Gas

Mayor Anthony also addressed public safety concerns, including the closure of Plush Lounge, emphasizing the importance of maintaining community safety while supporting business growth.

She concluded by stating that the Town's guiding principles moving forward would be to protect core services, address infrastructure, stay transparent with financial constraints, and make responsible decisions that match available resources. She emphasized the importance of stewardship, which sometimes means saying "not yet" to good ideas and making unpopular decisions to protect long-term stability.

Following her address, Mayor Anthony asked Mr. Rorie about the status of audits. Mr. Rorie reported that Mr. Overton had written financial statements that could be submitted for auditing, and they expected the 2022 audit to be completed by mid-February. He noted that they continue to apply pressure but must be mindful that the auditors have other obligations throughout the state.

Mr. Rorie then discussed the Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) Grant, which allowed analysis of the water and sewer systems. The draft report focused on sewer issues estimated total project costs at \$43 million over ten (10) years. If the Town were to borrow this amount and pay over a 20-year term, they would have to double water rates, which isn't financially feasible.

High-priority water improvement projects include:

- Isolation valve project: \$250,000 (already funded in current budget)
- Odell Road water line replacement: \$4,407,000
- Mack Street replacement: \$3,753,000
- Deerfield: \$5,482,000
- Water tank project: \$2,400,000

Mr. Rorie explained that the Town only has one (1) elevated water tank, resulting in low pressure and volume in some areas, which also affects fire protection capabilities.

He also mentioned the Merger Regionalization Feasibility (MRF) Study Grant from DEQ, which must be completed by September. This study examines potential partnerships to address infrastructure needs that the Town cannot handle alone.

Regarding the budget timeline, Mr. Rorie explained that as Budget Officer, he must evaluate department requests and balance the budget. As the Town is still on the Unit Assistance List (UAL) with the Local Government Commission (LGC), they must provide a draft budget to the LGC and coaching staff.

Mayor Anthony concluded by outlining priorities: staying on track with audits, pursuing infrastructure strategies that match the true scale of need, maintaining public safety, continuing natural gas expansion, using assessment studies as decision tools, and investing in community assets within budget constraints. She assured residents that the Town was not ignoring problems but staying focused, organized, and accountable.

Following the Mayor Anthony's address, Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland expressed concerns about the high tax rate, wondering if she could afford to continue living in Spring Lake after 46 years. She acknowledged the need to move forward strategically while considering citizens and demographics. Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland questioned whether water leak repairs were being properly completed and whether staff had proper certification. She also asked if the \$85 million request to the state had been approved. Mayor Anthony stated the state is not in session yet, as they will in April, but it has been submitted.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland acknowledged that the Town has the ability to request state assistance for infrastructure needs. She then addressed Mr. Rorie regarding the audit, noting that it was behind schedule. She stated that timely completion of audits had been a priority during her previous service on the Board to ensure a balanced budget and transparency for citizens regarding the use of tax revenues. She questioned the reasons for the audit being significantly delayed.

Mr. Rorie stated that the audits were not completed.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland acknowledged that the State had previously intervened by sending individuals to assist the Town after a change in the Board. She noted that the State balanced the Town's budget for approximately two (2) years before returning control to the Town and emphasized that significant funds were spent on outside assistance to ensure compliance. She expressed concern that, despite these efforts and expenditures, the audits were still not completed and questioned who should be held accountable, stating that the situation was unfair to the citizens and contrary to the Town's efforts to get back on track.

Mayor Anthony stated that the issue had previously been addressed and explained that Mr. Overton is currently working extended hours to bring the audits up to date.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland responded that citizens should be informed, noting concerns that substantial taxpayer funds were expended without the audits being completed. She expressed that this raised serious concerns regarding the use of public funds and emphasized the importance of understanding why the audit remains behind in order to avoid repeating past issues.

Commissioner Cooper stated that the Town paid substantial funds to the Local Government Commission (LGC), yet audits were not completed. She noted that progress did not occur until Mr. Overton established an ending balance, which allowed the Town to create a starting balance for fiscal year 2022. She further explained that when the Town transitioned from a per capita tax distribution to an ad valorem system, the Town lost approximately \$1.76 million in revenue, which required balancing the budget with significantly reduced funds. She stated that as a result, police and fire positions, along with certain part-time positions, were frozen. Commissioner Cooper emphasized that these issues had been discussed publicly and repeatedly during meetings, which are accessible to the public in person and online, and concluded by noting that the loss of \$1.76 million from a roughly \$10 million budget necessitated substantial cuts.

(A copy of Mayor Anthony's Presentation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see **ATTACHMENT TWO**)

- c. Discussion Regarding Board Town Cell Phones – Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland – Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland clarified that she hadn't requested any additional money but simply wanted a Town-issued phone for Town business rather than using her personal phone. She explained that the Clerk had given her a phone but then took it back because it needed to be put on the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland emphasized her commitment to transparency and integrity and stated she had never received any money for phone usage.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland mentioned that the Town previously had a phone contract for over 30 years but for over a year or two (2), citizens couldn't reach the Town or Police Department.

Mayor Anthony provided clarification regarding the Town's decision to discontinue providing cell phones, explaining that the change was made as a cost-saving measure due to both device and

recurring service expenses. She stated that the Town transitioned to an application-based system, which significantly reduced costs. Mayor Anthony further explained that the \$50 amount is automatically included as a monthly stipend within the Board's salaries and advised that additional details could be confirmed with Mr. Overton or Mr. Rorie.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland referenced a Personnel Action Form (PAF) signed on December 19, 2025.

Mayor Anthony responded that Mr. Rorie would address the matter.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland stated that the issue had been described as an oversight.

Mayor Anthony reiterated that, pursuant to policy and as a cost-saving measure, the Town eliminated secondary cell phones for non-essential employees and implemented a \$50 monthly stipend in conjunction with use of an application, rather than paying full cell phone service costs.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland questioned why a cell phone had been issued to her by the Clerk and later removed, stating that she did not place the matter on the agenda.

Mayor Anthony indicated that the issue was likely a minor mistake.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland responded that there had been multiple mistakes and reiterated that she was seeking clarification, explaining that the phone had been issued to her and that she had confirmed with the Clerk that it was not a new device and had been properly cleared.

Commissioner Jackson expressed concern about the cost of changes to the Town's telephone system and stated that the Board had not received clear information regarding the reasons for those changes.

Mayor Anthony explained that phone numbers were transferred to an application-based system and clarified that the change was part of a technology upgrade.

Commissioner Jackson noted that the Town's main telephone number had changed and requested information on the associated costs, emphasizing the importance of cost-effective decision-making.

Mayor Anthony responded that such matters would be reviewed during upcoming budget updates and discussions.

The Clerk clarified that the Town's main phone number was changed because, during transitions between Verizon and T-Mobile providers, T-Mobile would not release the number, necessitating the change.

Commissioner Jackson suggested that the inability to retain the phone number indicated there may have been an issue preventing its release.

Mayor Anthony responded that service providers have discretion over releasing numbers, particularly for business accounts.

Commissioner Jackson questioned the difference between business and personal phone number portability, asking whether any outstanding issues existed and why the change was necessary.

Mayor Anthony then directed the discussion back to the agenda to remain on topic.

- d. Discussion Regarding Future Agenda Preparation – Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland – Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland recommended that, for future meetings, draft agendas be provided to the Board for review prior to being finalized and distributed to the public, in order to ensure accuracy and avoid misunderstandings. She noted that the agenda was received on Thursday for a Monday meeting, which she stated did not allow sufficient time for review. She expressed concern that items could be perceived negatively by the public without prior clarification from Board members. She stated that earlier review of draft agendas would allow Board members the opportunity to address or correct items before publication and would help ensure clarity, consistency, and alignment among the Board.

Mayor Anthony stated this matter is addressed within the Town's Rules of Procedure.

The Clerk confirmed this.

Mayor Anthony then noted that the established structure already outlines how the process should be handled.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland reiterated her request that draft agendas be provided to the Board for review prior to finalization and public distribution, stating that the intent was to ensure clarity and consistency among Board members and avoid misunderstandings.

Mayor Anthony responded that the agenda process and timing are outlined in the Rules of Procedure. When Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland asked where the Rules of Procedure could be found, the Clerk stated they are posted on the Town's website and that she would also send them to the Board.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland stated that she still preferred receiving a draft agenda in advance and noted that any changes to the process could be voted on if necessary.

Mayor Anthony explained that modifying the agenda process would require amendments to the Rules of Procedure, which would need to be brought before the Board for discussion at a future meeting. She stated that, in the meantime, the Clerk would distribute the Rules of Procedure to the full Board for review.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether the Rules of Procedure require the Clerk to send agendas to the Board for approval prior to public release. Mayor Anthony responded that agenda approval is currently handled by her and noted that any proposed changes could be placed on a future agenda for discussion.

Commissioner Jackson expressed concern that her name had been included on the agenda for discussion of compensation without her request, stating that this led to public misunderstanding. Mayor Anthony acknowledged the concern and stated that the matter would be addressed when the Rules of Procedure are reviewed.

- e. Discussion Regarding Recycling Services by GFL – Commissioner Soñá L. Cooper – Commissioner Cooper expressed concerns regarding the recycling services provided by GFL as there were numerous resident complaints alleging that recycling materials are being collected and dumped in the same truck as household trash. Mel Acosta, General Manager II, GFL Environmental was in attendance for any questions or concerns for which his insight or clarification would be helpful.

Mr. Acosta clarified for the Board and residents that there are two (2) types of trash cans: the black trash can for regular trash and the green or blue recycling bin.

Mayor Anthony asked that when materials are collected and placed in the same bin, are they sorted once they arrive at the appropriate facility. Mr. Acosta confirmed that if materials are combined, the truck is directed to the recycling facility, where items are sorted and any contaminated materials are identified.

Commissioner Cooper stated that she had received several calls from residents regarding this issue and emphasized the need for clarification. Mr. Acosta responded that residents are encouraged to contact him directly with any questions or concerns, and he offered to provide his contact information for that purpose, which is 910-316-9263. He emphasized that he was local and located just minutes away, unlike previous GFL contacts.

Mayor Anthony noted an improvement in service, stating that the Town has experienced fewer truck breakdowns than in the past. Mr. Acosta confirmed this improvement and reported that approximately 30% of the fleet has been replaced and that a new maintenance team is in place. He also shared that a new truck bearing a “We Support Our Troops” decal would be in service, noting his veteran status and the importance of supporting the military community.

Mayor Anthony thanked Mr. Acosta for his service to the country and to the community and emphasized the importance of maintaining quality service for residents.

Commissioner Jackson and Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland also expressed appreciation for the improved service, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to resident concerns.

- f. Discussion Regarding Speed Humps on Town-owned Streets – Town Manager Jon Rorie – Mr. Rorie addressed traffic-related concerns raised during public comment and explained that he had provided the Board with several draft and example traffic calming policies for consideration. He stated that similar issues had arisen in every municipality he has served and emphasized the importance of establishing a clear Board-adopted policy to guide decisions regarding traffic control measures.

Mr. Rorie explained that traffic calming decisions should focus on when, where, and how devices such as speed humps, speed tables, or other measures may be installed on residential streets. Using Cecil Avenue as an example, he noted that staff and the Police Department had evaluated conditions and that any action should be based on established engineering warrants, including traffic volume, vehicle speeds, accident history, and applicable MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) standards. He emphasized that speed bumps are among the most aggressive measures and that alternatives such as speed tables are often preferred, particularly by public safety agencies.

Mr. Rorie stated that the Board must determine key policy elements, including what constitutes a traffic problem, which devices may be used, compliance with engineering standards, and who bears the cost of installation. He provided examples from other municipalities where resident petitions and cost-sharing requirements were part of the policy framework. He clarified that this is a legislative policy decision to be made by the Board, not by staff or the Police Department.

He concluded by asking whether the Board would like staff to draft a simplified, generic traffic calming policy for Board consideration.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether the traffic statistics and thresholds discussed applied to residential streets or to main highways. Mr. Rorie clarified that the data and policy considerations apply only to residential streets, not to main thoroughfares or boulevards, and emphasized that determining appropriate thresholds is ultimately a Board decision.

Commissioner Jackson expressed concern that even a small number of speeding vehicles in a neighborhood could pose serious safety risks and suggested observing traffic conditions firsthand to ensure neighborhoods are not overlooked. Mayor Anthony stated that the matter would be brought to a February Work Session for further discussion and policy development. She explained that staff would conduct evaluations and prepare recommendations for the Board's consideration, and added that Mr. Rorie, along with Chief Jarman, had conducted windshield surveys to assess traffic conditions.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland referenced the agenda cover sheet regarding discussion of unauthorized installation of speed bumps prompted by recent incidents. She acknowledged the safety concerns discussed and noted that the document stated the speed bumps had been removed. Mr. Rorie confirmed that the installations were unauthorized and had been removed, and clarified that the resident who installed them retained possession of the speed bumps. Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland stated that she wanted clarification on their location and expressed appreciation that the matter was being discussed to address community concerns.

There was consensus from the Board for staff to prepare a generic policy on speed humps to be presented at the February Work Session, scheduled for Monday, February 23, 2026.

- g. Resolution 2026-1; To Obtain Permanent Ownership and Maintenance of Caelin Farms Road, Old Angus Lane, and Tori Drive in Caelin Farms Subdivision Phase I – Town Manager Jon Rorie & Mayor Kia Anthony – Mr. Rorie explained that the acceptance of new roads is a procedural matter. Once roads are constructed to required engineering standards, inspected, and officially approved, the Town

accepts them into its system. Upon acceptance, the roads become part of the Town's long-term maintenance responsibilities funded through Powell Bill resources. He noted that accepting these roads would add to the approximate 29 miles to the Town's roadway system and confirmed that Powell Bill funding would increase accordingly.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland asked for clarification regarding the maintenance responsibilities outlined in the document, noting that it states the Town will assume maintenance and that Town employees will perform the work. She asked what "maintenance" would entail, particularly concerning lifetime maintenance.

Mr. Rorie explained that the Town would be responsible for routine maintenance such as pothole repairs and, over the long term, resurfacing based on the roadway life cycle. He stated that resurfacing is not performed in-house and must be outsourced. Mr. Rorie noted that the Town's Powell Bill funded approximately \$800,000 in resurfacing this year, with about half of that work already completed.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland expressed concern that while the document references lifetime resurfacing, existing roads are already in poor condition and are a significant concern for residents. She noted that temporary repairs often fail within months and asked how lifetime maintenance for new roads compares to the Town's responsibility for older roads.

Mr. Rorie stated that the estimated cost for a two-inch pavement overlay is approximately \$250,000 to \$350,000 per mile. He explained that resurfacing projects are bid annually and managed through the Town's civil engineering firm. He further cautioned that contractors are typically more cost-effective when performing larger projects.

Mr. Rorie also advised that staff have completed Strong Towns Academy training, emphasizing the importance of carefully evaluating future maintenance liabilities before annexing or accepting additional roads. He stated that the Town currently budgets approximately \$800,000 for paving, with roughly \$1 million in available reserves, equating to about two (2) years of paving capacity. He further explained that the Town receives approximately \$350,000 annually in Powell Bill funds, and any paving costs beyond that amount require a General Fund subsidy.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland stated that it is important for citizens to understand the Town's financial limitations while also recognizing that road conditions are a major community concern. She reiterated her concern regarding lifetime maintenance obligations for both new and existing roads.

Attorney Porter explained that the action before the Board is largely a formality, as a Resolution is required to legally accept ownership of the roads. He stated that the prior Board had already approved the plat and agreed that once the roads were constructed to Town standards, they would be dedicated to the public. Acceptance of the roads therefore formalizes the Town's ownership and responsibility for those streets.

**Action:** Motion to approve Resolution 2026-1; To Obtain Permanent Ownership and Maintenance of Caelin Farms Road, Old Angus Lane, and Tori Drive in Caelin Farms Subdivision Phase I.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper  
**Second by:** Commissioner Thompson  
**Vote:** Unanimous

- h. Resolution 2026-2; Providing Notice Pursuant to Interlocal Agreements and Supporting Full County Funding and Management of the Joint 911 Operations Center – Town Manager Jon Rorie & Mayor Kia Anthony – Mr. Rorie explained that the Town had entered into an agreement with Cumberland County for 911 services, agreeing to provide approximately \$135,000 per year to fund staff that were absorbed from the Town of Spring Lake into the 911 center. Over a 10-year period, Town residents had subsidized the operation of the 911 center to the tune of about \$1.3 million.

Mr. Rorie explained that residents of the Town were effectively being triple-taxed for 911 services: they pay County taxes for services, they pay municipal taxes, and then the Town of Spring Lake pays an additional \$135,000 annually to the County for 911 operations. Meanwhile, the County receives state 911 surcharge funding (budgeted at \$676,000 this year) for operating the center.

Mayor Anthony thanked Mr. Rorie for identifying the issue, stating that it revealed what amounted to double, and in some cases, triple taxation. She noted that correcting the issue ensures the Town continues to be good stewards of the Town's tax dollars.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarification, confirming that the Town has been paying approximately \$135,000 annually to Cumberland County related to 911 dispatch services and whether that funding was used to support personnel already in place.

Mr. Rorie confirmed that the personnel have been in place for approximately 15 years and that the Town has been subsidizing their costs in addition to other funding sources.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether discontinuing the subsidy would impact 911 services in the Town.

Mr. Rorie stated that 911 services are provided through the Cumberland County Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and that the Town does not operate its own 911 center. Discontinuing the subsidy would not affect service availability.

Mayor Anthony explained that the Town is withdrawing the subsidy because Cumberland County receives State funding for 911 services. She further stated that the State funding provisions remove the requirement for the Town to renegotiate the Interlocal Agreement.

Commissioner Jackson stated that the explanation provided clarity.

Mr. Rorie stated that the payments had continued on "auto-pilot" for several years.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland referenced documents included in the agenda, noting that a memorandum dated June 11, 2025, indicated approximately \$140,000 in Spring Lake property tax subsidies for

Cumberland County Emergency Services, while the current agenda item reflected approximately \$135,000 effective June 30, 2026. She asked for clarification on the discrepancy.

Mr. Rorie explained that the June 11, 2025 memorandum used an approximate figure, indicated by a tilde, and that the actual amount is \$135,000.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland expressed concern regarding the long-term impact on taxpayers, noting that the subsidy has been in place since 2009 and resulted in residents effectively being taxed multiple times. She asked whether taxpayers would receive any form of reimbursement.

Attorney Porter stated that the Town legally entered into the agreement, and therefore no reimbursement is required. He explained that the contract required a one-year notice to terminate, which has been properly provided, and that the matter is now before the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners in accordance with that requirement.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland reiterated her desire to understand the financial differences and how the change would impact future tax bills.

Mr. Rorie explained that the subsidy does not appear as a separate line item on individual tax bills, as it has been built into the Town's General Fund budget. He stated that approximately one (1) cent on the Town's tax rate equates to about \$72,000. He further explained that reallocating the \$130,000 could allow the Town to fund currently unfunded police positions or pursue other budgetary strategies, subject to Board direction.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland stated that while it is important to stop the double or triple taxation, she would like further clarification on the total tax impact paid by citizens for reference.

Mr. Rorie stated that the amount equates to approximately 1.8 cents on the Town's tax rate, or approximately \$129,000 annually.

Mr. Overton, speaking from the audience, stated that the amount is just under two (2) cents on the Town's tax rate.

Commissioner Cooper asked whether Cumberland County also receives funding from the 911 surcharge collected through telephone bills, noting that residents pay a separate charge for 911 services.

Mr. Overton, speaking from the audience, stated that the State funding referenced – approximately \$600,000 – is derived from the 911 surcharge on telephone bills. He further stated that residents contribute to 911 services through municipal taxes, County taxes, and the telephone tax.

**Action:** Motion to approve Resolution 2026-2; Providing Notice Pursuant to Interlocal Agreements and Supporting Full County Funding and Management of the Joint 911 Operations Center.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Second by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Vote:** Unanimous

- i. Resolution 2026-3; Authorizing the Lease of the Community Recreation Center Building to Cumberland County – Town Manager Jon Rorie & Mayor Kia Anthony – Mr. Rorie explained that Cumberland County had been managing the Recreation Center under an Interlocal Agreement, but the County had never considered the debt service on the building in that agreement. The Town is still making annual debt service payments of approximately \$131,200 for the Center.

Mayor Anthony clarified that the County was not currently paying for anything related to the building itself, only the services provided inside. The 5-cent tax that Town of Spring Lake residents pay goes towards the salaries and services at the Recreation Center, not the building debt. Under this Resolution, the County would take on the debt service payments as the tenant of the building.

Mayor Anthony emphasized that the Town would retain ownership of the building and the County was essentially renting it to provide services. The County was not paying the Town; rather, the Town would no longer be paying for the debt service on a building that the County was using.

Commissioner Jackson asked when the proposed Resolution would take effect and whether it would coincide with the expiration of the existing agreement. She asked when the current contract ends.

Mayor Anthony explained that the item before the Board is a Resolution, not a contract. She stated that Cumberland County requested the Town adopt a Resolution so the matter could be formally presented to the County Board of Commissioners for their consideration. The Resolution does not take effect on its own but is forwarded to the County for a vote, and the Town does not control whether the County approves or denies the request.

Commissioner Jackson asked what the Resolution accomplishes that a contract does not.

Mayor Anthony stated that the Resolution simply requests that the County assume funding responsibility for the lease, specifically the debt service. No agreement is being executed at this time.

Attorney Porter explained that Cumberland County is not currently paying lease payments to the Town. He stated that, in order for the County Board to consider assuming the debt service, the Town must first pass a Resolution requesting it. If adopted, the Resolution would be sent to the County Commissioners, who may then vote on it. No lease or agreement would be signed immediately.

Commissioner Jackson confirmed that the Resolution only authorizes discussion and consideration by the County and that any formal agreement would return to the Town Board for approval.

Mr. Rorie confirmed that any lease agreement would require further negotiation and legal review and would be brought back to the Board at a later date.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether discussions had already occurred between Town Board members and County Commissioners.

Mayor Anthony stated that discussions had taken place during an open meeting that was available to the entire Board, attended by herself, Commissioner Cooper, and Commissioner Lackman. She stated the discussion was not exclusive and was open to all Board members.

Mayor Anthony further clarified that the County is not providing no support, noting that the 5-cent tax rate supports staffing and services at the recreation facility. She stated that the County has also made significant investments in repairs, including HVAC upgrades and park improvements such as Mendoza Park. She noted that the County manages programming, staffing, maintenance, and operations, while the Town continues to own the facility.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether the 5-cent tax rate contributes to the County's management of the facility while the Town pays the mortgage.

Mayor Anthony confirmed this and stated that the Town's only direct cost is the debt service on the facility.

Commissioner Burgess expressed concern that the arrangement did not appear to provide sufficient benefit to the Town.

Mayor Anthony responded that the County has provided substantial value through facility repairs, park upgrades, staffing, and programming. She stated that the Town entered the agreement during a period of financial hardship and could not afford to operate the Parks and Recreation Department independently. She further noted that Cumberland County manages Parks and Recreation services for most municipalities in the County, with the exception of Hope Mills.

Commissioner Burgess asked whether the Town continues to pay insurance for the facility.

Mayor Anthony confirmed that the Town remains responsible for insurance, as the property remains Town-owned.

Commissioner Jackson asked why the proposed lease term references 21 years.

Mr. Rorie explained that the 21-year term corresponds to the remaining duration of the Town's debt service on the facility.

Commissioner Jackson inquired about the title. Mr. Overton, speaking from the audience, stated that the title to the building will remain with the Town at all times.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland expressed concern regarding affordability for residents, noting that citizens continue to pay taxes supporting the facility but now face higher rental and usage fees. She stated that

she would like to see incentives or reduced rates for Town residents, given their financial contribution, and expressed concern that affordability has reduced community access to the facility.

Mayor Anthony stated that the Town has been discussing the need for Town of Spring Lake representation on the County Parks and Recreation Committee to better advocate for resident concerns, including fees and access. She noted that the transition to County management was challenging but communication is improving.

Mayor Anthony asked Commissioner Jackson if she would be willing to serve as the Town of Spring Lake's representative on the County Parks and Recreation Committee.

Commissioner Jackson agreed.

Commissioner Jackson asked about the duration of the Interlocal Agreement.

Mayor Anthony stated that the Interlocal Agreement is ongoing and binding unless the Town chooses to withdraw, which she noted would be detrimental to the Town.

Attorney Porter stated that the agreement functions similarly to the Town's 911 Interlocal Agreement.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland asked about the dates listed in the document.

Mayor Anthony clarified that the dates referenced apply to the debt service schedule, not the Interlocal Agreement itself.

Attorney Porter clarified that the Interlocal Agreement for Parks and Recreation management remains in effect indefinitely unless terminated by the Town.

Commissioner Jackson requested a copy of the Interlocal Agreement.

Attorney Porter stated that the agreement is a public record.

Mr. Rorie stated that the Resolution addresses annual debt service payments only. He noted that a future lease agreement could be structured for varying terms and would require separate Board approval.

Mayor Anthony stated that the Resolution specifies that any final payment or lease arrangement would return to the Town Board for consideration and approval.

**Action:** Motion to approve Resolution 2026-3; Authorizing the Lease of the Community Recreation Center Building to Cumberland County.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Second by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Vote:** Unanimous

- j. Mayor's Report – Mayor Kia Anthony – First, Mayor Anthony reported that she would be attending a meeting with FAMPO tomorrow, Tuesday, January 13, 2026, and would bring back any information from that meeting. Second, Mayor Anthony mentioned an upcoming meeting with the Mayors of Fayetteville and Hope Mills to discuss regionalization issues and opportunities. Last, Mayor Anthony, after the Board of Commissioners Report, highlighted that she had walked through her neighborhood that morning and noticed several houses that had been cited with red door hangers were now cleaned up.
  
- k. Board of Commissioners Report – Spring Lake Board of Commissioners – Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland thanked everyone for attending and encouraged continued participation and support of the Town. She explained that she asks questions to ensure a full understanding of the matters before the Board, noting that she does not vote on items unless she clearly understands them and wants the public to have the same understanding. First, Commissioner Thompson wished everyone a Happy New Year. Last, Commissioner Thompson announced free tutoring at Bethel AME Zion Church, located at 255 Vass Road, will begin tomorrow, Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 5:30 pm and will be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from January 13<sup>th</sup> through April. The program is open to any children who may need additional academic support. Commissioner Jackson & Commissioner Burgess thanked those who attended the Board meeting this evening. First, Commissioner Cooper reported that a community cleanup will take place on Monday, January 19, 2026, at 9:00 am near Tractor Supply, focusing on the cleanup of an historic slave cemetery in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Second, Commissioner Cooper congratulated Mayor Anthony on her acceptance into the Advanced Leadership Corps (ALC) program at the UNC School of Government. Third, Commissioner Cooper shared that she will be scheduling meetings for her strategic focus group, which is Safe, Vibrant, and Healthy Community, and noted that additional community volunteers are still needed. Fourth, Commissioner Cooper is working with Brightspeed to place Blessing Boxes in the community and to explore opportunities for providing free Wi-Fi at strategic locations. Last, Commissioner Cooper announced that a community sweep is planned for March in the Holly Hills area. Residents are encouraged to ensure compliance with community standards, including removing junk piles and addressing abandoned or inoperable vehicles parked in the right-of-way.
  
- l. Manager's Report – Town Manager Jon Rorie – Mr. Rorie stated that the focus groups are intended to ensure Board representation and expressed his hope that all topics discussed align within the four (4) established planning categories. He noted that, with two (2) former Commissioners, there are currently vacancies in representation on the water infrastructure and blight focus groups. He added that this matter was expected to be discussed further with the Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) and emphasized the need to appoint representatives so the group can revisit and address these issues moving forward.
  
- m. Town Attorney Report – Town Attorney Michael Porter – Attorney Porter provided an update regarding SLPA, noting that the matter was raised during the meeting and that staff is still awaiting coordination and feedback from Hutchins Law Firm on the current status. He explained for the benefit of new Board members that the property in question is owned by SLPA, which is a separate legal entity. To address the issue, SLPA purchased the note from the bank and will proceed with foreclosure on that note in order to obtain ownership of the property.

**10. CLOSED SESSION**

**Action:** Motion to approve to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(6) – Personnel.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Second by:** Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Action:** Motion to approve to come back into Open Session. No action was taken.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Thompson

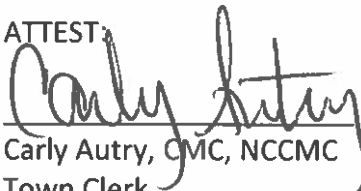
**Second by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Vote:** Unanimous

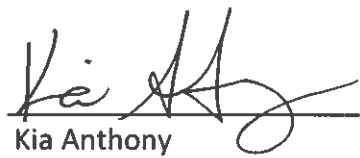
**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**Action:** There being no further business to come before the Board, Mayor Anthony adjourned the meeting at 9:28 pm.

ATTEST:

  
Carly Autry, CMC, NCCMC  
Town Clerk



  
Kia Anthony  
Mayor

DC

ATTACHMENT ONE

Debra Clyde

110 Marvin Drive. Spring Lake, 28390 

debraclyde@icloud.com   
(910) 303-9049 

To: Board of Commissioners, Town of Spring Lake, NC

THRU: Carly Autry, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk,

January 11, 2026

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Greetings,

I am taking this time to submit my personal concerns regarding items on the agenda for January 12, 2026. I will be unavailable to attend the meeting in person. Please note my address in the heading above.

The newest members of the Board of Commissioners should be cognizant of the possibility that the LGC is still watching the government and staff of the Town of Spring Lake, NC. Discussions of bringing back expenses to to budget that increase expenses that are not necessary for the health and welfare of the citizens of the town should not be discussed.

Regarding NEW BUSINESS c. Discussion Regarding Board Town Cell Phones. There is a system in place whereby the current members are paid a stipend that is a fair market value for most companies. \$50.00 per month will allow you to get a plan with some companies that will allow you to put \$35.00 in you pocket. The current process allows for all of the legal requirements for public records and confidentiality to be met without the cost of purchasing and maintaining a separate phone. I am not sure if we should be electing officials that are not willing to use the technology available to save expenses.

Regarding NEW BUSINESS d. Discussion Regarding Board Compensation. No thank you. You chose to serve. The stipend at its current rate has been satisfactory for the current board members. It can be satisfactory for the newly elected board members as well. The previous board saw fit to sacrifice their health insurance, I am quite certain that the new members can take the pay at the current rate without the health insurance as well.

Finally, it would not be wise for you to try to fire the Manager, Clerk, or the Finance Director. My contact information is in the heading.

Respectfully,

*Debra A. Clyde*

Debra A, Clyde  
110 Marvin Drive  
Spring Lake, NC 28390

# SPRING LAKE

## YEAR-END REVIEW

Calendar Year 2025 and FY26 Mid-Year Reality

January 12, 2026  
Mayor Kia Anthony

ATTACHMENT TWO

**2025 was about stabilizing the foundation by staying focused on the basics: planning, accountability, and protecting core services.**

WHAT RESIDENTS FELT IN 2025

## Rising Costs Everywhere

At the local level:

- Equipment and contracts
- Maintaining aging infrastructure
- Keeping skilled staff in critical roles

**17%**  
Water & Sewer Rate Increase  
(January 2025)

*Not a talking point—something families experience month to month*

COMMITMENT 1: PLANNING, NOT GUESSING

## Strategic Plan Focus Areas

• Safe, reliable water/sewer/stormwater systems

• Revitalizing town infrastructure

• Safe, vibrant, healthy community

• Economic development

*Impact teams established to tackle problems in a structured way*

**COMMITMENT 2: STAYING ACCOUNTABLE**

## Completing Overdue Audits

# \$150,000

Allocated this fiscal year for audits 2022-2025

Can't be spent on anything else—not salaries, not equipment, not new programs. It's an obligation we can't avoid.

**SPRING LAKE PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS (SLPA)**

## Taking Ownership and Fixing the Problem

What it was:

- Nonprofit formed 2019
- Economic development vehicle
- Land swap with Fort Liberty
- Attract major employers

What happened:

- Borrowed \$3.5M from BB&T
- Bought 160 acres Manchester Rd
- Federal approval denied
- Loan defaulted
- 5 years unpaid taxes/fees

## SLPA: THE 2025 CLEANUP

**From \$3.5M Problem to Managed Solution**

Settlement: \$450,000 • Resolved \$3.5M debt with Truist

Note Purchase: \$450,000 • Town purchased defaulted note

Parcel Sale: \$75,000 • Sold one parcel, paid back taxes

Debt Forgiveness: \$2.9M • Unrecoverable debt written off

**Result: Recovered 160 acres, positioned for strategic use. SLPA dissolved.**

## THE BUDGET REALITY

**Why We Must Stay Disciplined**

**62%**  
Public Safety Share of General Fund

## Constraints:

- Limited revenue mix
- Frozen/unfunded positions
- Every dollar allocated
- Infrastructure needs
- Audit requirements

*Three ways to pay for new costs: cut something else, raise revenues, or delay work (at higher cost later)*

**PROPERTY TAX REVALUATION: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD**

## Benefits and Challenges

Benefits:

- Reflects growth
- Strengthens tax base
- Long-term planning
- Builds resident wealth

**74.1¢**

Per \$100 valuation

Highest in Cumberland County

We don't have flexibility to simply drop taxes while systems crumble, positions stay frozen, and audits need completion.

**THE INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGE WE CANNOT AVOID**

## Crumbling Systems: The Numbers

System Age & Condition:

- 40-60 years old
- 60% outdated clay/concrete pipes
- Only 50% water billable (rest leaks)

January 2025:

- 5 major water main breaks
- One break: 3.5M gallons lost
- Water paid for, ran into ground

<b>Sewer Rehab</b>	<b>\$45-50M</b>
<b>Water Replacement</b>	<b>\$20-25M</b>
<b>Total Need</b>	<b>\$65-80M</b>

**Every dollar in proactive rehabilitation saves us three dollars in emergency repairs**

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STRATEGY

## Pursuing Every Available Dollar

State Legislative Request (February 20, 2025):

Infrastructure Grants Secured: Over \$1.5 Million

**Infrastructure investment must be our absolute top budget priority**

THE SALES TAX CHANGE

## Major Revenue Loss

# -\$1.76M

Annual Sales Tax Revenue Loss

The Change:

From per capita (population)  
To ad valorem (property values)

The Impact:

16% of our General Fund  
Money we no longer have

*Same responsibilities. The math doesn't disappear.*

## PROGRESS PEOPLE CAN SEE

### 2025 Accomplishments

Parks: Mendoza playground (late Aug), Veterans Park upgrades

Art: New mural at Mendoza with NC symbols

Stormwater: \$318,000 invested in maintenance and repairs

Natural Gas: \$200,000 state grant for expansion

Safety: Plush Lounge closure—safety first

Community: Spring cleanup, First Fridays, Tree Lighting

Planning: Lillian Black Elementary findings from UNC

## DISCIPLINED LEADERSHIP

### The Next Six Months: Stewardship

**Protect core services, address infrastructure, and stay compliant—while being honest about what we can afford.**

Be very cautious about adding new recurring expenses or expanding benefits not already planned.

*Good leadership sometimes means saying not yet to good ideas. It means holding the line. It means making unpopular decisions to protect long-term stability.*

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

## FY26 Priorities

- Stay on track with audits and keep public informed
- Infrastructure strategy matching true scale of need
- Maintain public safety coverage sustainably
- Continue natural gas expansion
- Use assessments as fact-based decision tools
- Invest in community assets within budget

## We Will Not Ignore the Problems

We're staying focused, organized, and accountable—that's how a town gets through tight seasons without losing its core.

*Thank you.*