

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

April 13, 2026

MINUTES

6:00 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 Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Commissioner Tony Burgess
Commissioner Soña L. Cooper
Commissioner Jackie Jackson
Commissioner Adrian Thomsson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor Kia Anthony

OTHERS PRESENT:

Carly Autry, Town Clerk
Dennis English Jr., Interim Town Manager
Police Chief Errol Jarman, Town of Spring Lake Police Department
James Overton, Finance Director
Lieutenant Danny Sutton, Town of Spring Lake Police Department

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland declared a quorum and called the meeting to order.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pastor Williams gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

Commissioner Jackson requested to remove item 7e. Town Manager Search under Presentations.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Action: Motion to approve the April 13, 2026, Regular Meeting agenda with the deletion.

Motion by: Commissioner Cooper

Second by: Commissioner Thompson

Vote: Unanimous

5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

Action: Motion to approve draft minutes of March 19, 2026, Special Meeting, and draft minutes of March 23, 2026, Work Session.

Motion by: Commissioner Thompson

Second by: Commissioner Jackson

Vote: Unanimous

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Quinice Marshall, Spring Lake resident, addressed the Board regarding the Town's past financial challenges and current concerns. She referenced the 2021 financial crisis, including intervention by the Local Government Commission (LGC) and the impact of internal financial misconduct, noting the damage to both the Town's finances and reputation. She commended the Mayor and prior Board for their efforts over the past four (4) years to restore stability, professionalism, and public trust through collaboration, training, and relationship-building. Mrs. Marshall expressed concern with recent actions by the newly elected Board, stating that expectations of increased transparency and communication have not been met. She cited a lack of public engagement, the use of Closed Session for decision-making, and the removal of the Town Manager without public explanation, along with the presence of a potential replacement at the time of dismissal. She also raised concerns about the tone of recent meetings, referencing instances of heightened conflict and emphasizing the community's desire to avoid returning to past negative perceptions. Mrs. Marshall concluded by posing questions regarding the dismissal of the Town Manager, the process used to identify a replacement, and the hiring process for the Interim Town Manager.

Pastor Steve England, First Baptist Church, thanked the Board, the Mayor, the Town, and Chief of Police for their work in addressing community concerns and the recent car show at his church the previous weekend.

Sean Brigner, Spring Lake resident, addressed the Board regarding an upcoming school-related Public Hearing and encouraged community participation at the scheduled meeting. He emphasized the importance of residents attending and expressing their concerns. He stated that he had reviewed publicly available data and raised concerns about discrepancies in student enrollment figures, noting that previously reported numbers may not reflect current enrollment. He also highlighted that students from other schools, including W.T. Brown Elementary, could be impacted by potential changes, and stressed the importance of ensuring affected families are informed. Mr. Brigner questioned the accuracy and justification of data used in decision-making, particularly regarding budget allocations. He referenced concerns about significant funding being directed toward appearance-related improvements and energy conservation efforts, and questioned whether such expenditures justify potential school closures. He concluded by stating his intention to attend and speak at the upcoming meeting to present these concerns and also noted a request for a speed bump on Mack Street.

James O'Garra, Spring Lake resident, addressed the Board regarding traffic safety concerns at the intersection of Duncan Road and Laketree Blvd., stating that the stop sign is frequently disregarded. He noted that recent police presence in the area has improved compliance and expressed appreciation for those efforts. Mr. O'Garra also commented on recent Board actions, stating that requests for a Special Meeting had been declined on multiple occasions, which contributed to some Board members being unaware of actions related to the Town Manager position.

Robyn Chadwick, Spring Lake resident and former Mayor Pro Tem and Commissioner, addressed the Board regarding the proposed closure and consolidation of Manchester Elementary School. She emphasized the school's significance to the Spring Lake community, describing it as a central part of the Town's identity and stability. Ms. Chadwick encouraged community members to attend the Cumberland County Board of Education meeting scheduled for April 14, 2026, at 6:00 pm, and to sign up in advance to speak in support of keeping the school open. She also noted a Public Forum scheduled for April 27, 2026, from 6:00 to 7:00 pm at Manchester Elementary, encouraging strong community participation. She expressed concerns about the potential impacts of closure, including longer travel times for students, overcrowding at other schools, and reduced community connection. She emphasized the importance of maintaining the school to support local families, community identity, and equitable access to education. Ms. Chadwick urged residents to remain engaged, attend upcoming meetings, and advocate for keeping Manchester Elementary School open.

Bettye Sanford, Spring Lake resident, addressed the Board regarding multiple community concerns, including the proposed school closure, housing, infrastructure, public safety, and utility services. She expressed opposition to the closure of Manchester Elementary School, stating that students should remain within the Spring Lake community. She also stated that housing is available in the area, noting concerns about affordability rather than availability. Ms. Sanford raised concerns about road conditions, specifically along HWY 210 and HWY 87, and noted the need for repairs as well as attention to deteriorating buildings. She also emphasized the need for increased police presence to address speeding in residential neighborhoods. Additionally, she expressed concerns about accessibility related to the water payment kiosk, noting challenges for elderly and disabled residents. Ms. Sanford concluded by encouraging community members to attend upcoming meetings and advocate for local concerns.

Wilbur Graham, Spring Lake resident, shared information about programs that service the underserved community, including food banks and health classes. Mr. Graham discussed two (2) major projects they were working on: first, the Spring Lake Civic Center located on 230 Chapel Hill Road, which started 75 years ago and was being renovated this year with hopes of working with the city to help finish the project. Second, he mentioned the Deerfield Cemetery located by Tractor Supply.

7. PRESENTATIONS

a. Certificates of Recognition – Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland – Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland presented the certificates in lieu of Mayor Anthony's absence. The certificates were presented to the Spring Lake Fly Girlz basketball team for winning the basketball championship at the Spring Lake Recreation Center.

b. PY26 AAP (Annual Action Plan) – Rayshonia Manuel (Ray), Community Development Director, Cumberland County Community Development – Mrs. Manuel explained that tonight was not just an informational meeting but an opportunity for the community to help shape priorities and projects that impact the community. She emphasized that while they were responsible for administering funds, they wanted to ensure the work continued to reflect real community needs.

Mrs. Manuel explained they continued to do all their projects with available funds, including upcoming public services, affordable housing, infrastructure, and public facilities applications that were currently online. She noted they would continue doing as many projects as possible until funding ran out.

Commissioner Cooper inquired about the process for residents to access housing rehabilitation assistance.

Mrs. Manuel explained that interested individuals must contact the office to schedule an appointment and complete an intake process to determine eligibility. If qualified, a housing rehabilitation specialist conducts an assessment of the home to identify needed repairs. Based on the assessment, the project is categorized as either a full rehabilitation or a minor repair project.

Mrs. Manuel noted that the minor repair program now provides up to \$30,000, increased from \$10,000 in prior years due to rising construction costs. Full rehabilitation projects are funded through a deferred forgivable loan program, which includes a six-year deferral period followed by gradual forgiveness over up to 15 years. A lien is placed on the property during the affordability period to protect both the homeowner and the program's investment.

Mrs. Manuel emphasized that the program does not result in out-of-pocket costs for qualifying residents and offered to provide additional information if requested.

Commissioner Cooper asked about programs for seniors in the community, noting that with taxes and everything going up, it would be good to point seniors toward available resources. Mrs. Manuel confirmed they would help as many as they could until money ran out.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland inquired whether the housing rehabilitation funding, identified as federal HUD funding, was a low-interest loan.

Mrs. Manuel clarified that the assistance is not a traditional loan but a deferred forgivable loan. She explained that a lien is placed on the property for a 15-year period, with no payments required during the first six (6) years. After the deferral period, the loan balance is gradually forgiven annually until it is reduced to zero.

Mr. English asked for Mrs. Manuel's contact information and invited her to participate in a Focus Group meeting on revitalization of Town Infrastructure scheduled for the April 21, 2026, at 4 o'clock. Mr. English explained this was part of their strategic plan and that Mr. Carl Manning was also part of that committee. Mrs. Manuel indicated she would try her best to attend.

c. Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant – Amanda Scheck, Emergency Management Coordinator, Cumberland County – Ms. Scheck presented information about the BRIC Grant program. She explained that BRIC is FEMA's primary mitigation Grant program with the goal of reducing future disaster impacts by investing in projects before disasters occur.

Ms. Scheck described mitigation as taking steps before a disaster to reduce its impact, whether strengthening buildings, protecting against flooding, or managing wildfire risk. She emphasized that while

they cannot prevent hazards, they can reduce how they affect the community. For Spring Lake, this could mean improving drainage and protecting infrastructure.

Ms. Scheck explained that mitigation fits across the entire disaster cycle and is about reducing or eliminating long-term risks to people and property. Every dollar invested in mitigation saves multiple dollars in future disaster costs, making it both proactive and fiscally responsible.

The current funding cycle prioritizes projects that are ready to be implemented and demonstrate measurable risk reductions. BRIC supports projects like stormwater improvements, flood mitigation systems, and protection of critical infrastructure – the same types of needs previously identified locally, positioning Spring Lake to be competitive.

Ms. Scheck presented real examples of flooding impacts within Spring Lake, noting the effects of severe weather, stormwater challenges, and infrastructure strain across multiple areas. She mentioned prior discussions and efforts including stormwater initiatives and drainage improvement projects in areas like Deerfield Drive and Wapiti Drive.

From a funding standpoint, BRIC typically covers 75% of project costs with potential for up to 90% depending on eligibility. Projects can receive up to \$20 million in federal funding. The application deadline was set for July 23, 2026, 3:00 pm, with North Carolina's notice of funding opportunity expected to be released that week.

Commissioner Cooper asked about the massive flooding caused by the breach of the Woodlake Dam in Moore County and what could be done to prevent widespread flooding in the future. Ms. Scheck acknowledged the Little River runs through Spring Lake and is fed by the dam area in Moore County. While they couldn't control everything done there, they wanted to position the community so residents wouldn't be as impacted if dam water needed to be released. She offered to discuss potential projects and solutions in more detail.

d. Minimum Housing Update – Derek Mabe, Alliance Code Enforcement – Mr. Mabe presented the minimum housing update, explaining he would be doing more presentations and being part of Focus Groups. He reviewed the most recent two (2) monthly reports, covering cases from February and March 2026.

Mr. Mabe explained their reporting system, noting items in red were currently open and being worked on, with the next action listed beside each. Items in green were abated (demolished or taken care of), and items in yellow were on hold at the request of Town officials.

Mr. Mabe discussed progress on mobile home parks including White Eagle Lane through Misty Circle, South Connor Circle (where all dilapidated mobile homes had been removed), and Liberty Estates where around seven (7) mobile homes were demolished between reporting periods.

Mr. Mabe presented statistics showing they had opened 333 cases since being contracted, closed and abated 168, had 56 currently open and in progress, opened three (3) new cases in the most recent month,

transferred 64 cases to the police department that didn't meet minimum housing criteria, and had 42 cases on hold.

Mr. English requested Mr. Mabe to speak on the status of cases currently on hold. Mr. Mabe explained that these cases were placed on hold at the request of the Town for specific reasons. He noted that many of the cases were paused during coordination with the previous Town Manager, with an approach in place to address approximately ten (10) cases per month through the established review and approval process.

Commissioner Jackson inquired whether services were limited to housing or if commercial projects were also included. Mr. Mabe stated that both residential and commercial projects are handled, noting that "CM" designates commercial cases and "MH" refers to minimum housing.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland asked for clarification on a specific case on hold located on Bragg Blvd., and Mr. Mabe confirmed it was the former BB&T property.

Mr. English updated citizens that Mr. Mabe had been added to their infrastructure focus group as part of their strategic plan to address blighted homes, abandoned homes, and commercial buildings. He noted this was an ongoing effort with monthly meetings, and Mr. Mabe was now reporting to him.

e. Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) – David Honeycutt & Glenn McFadden – Mr. Honeycutt explained the water system consists primarily of water sources (purchased water from Cumberland County and Fayetteville PWC) and water distribution lines throughout Spring Lake.

Mr. Honeycutt identified challenges with the water system, particularly the water loss number which was hurting the Town both in repairs and financially. On the sewer side, he noted problems with older sewer lines, particularly clay sewer lines with joints and short pipe lengths that are susceptible to leaks and cracks, allowing infiltration and inflow that reduces capacity at the wastewater plant.

The asset inventory assessment identified \$36 million in water system projects and over \$44 million in sewer system projects, largely consisting of water main and sewer main replacements. The water side also included a project to add a water tank and isolation valves to help with water loss. The sewer side included work at two (2) lift stations.

Mr. Honeycutt explained they ran rate analyses to determine feasibility, calling the numbers "frightening" and "very high." They looked at both aggressive approaches to complete all work and reduced approaches with more reasonable pricing, though still challenging rates.

Mr. Honeycutt discussed the Viable Utilities Program where Spring Lake was identified as a distressed utility. This spring round had \$20 million available with a \$5 million maximum per applicant for 100% Grant funding.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland requested clarification regarding funding limits, specifically the \$20 million program cap and the \$5 million maximum per applicant under the distressed utilities funding.

Mr. Honeycutt explained that the program is highly competitive on a statewide level among eligible utilities on the distressed list. He noted that while not all eligible entities will apply, those that do may request varying amounts, typically ranging from approximately \$1 million up to the \$5 million maximum, sometimes combined with loan components.

Mr. Honeycutt further stated that due to the competitive nature of the program, only a limited number of high-scoring applications may be awarded funding. Additionally, a portion of the total funding – approximately \$1.5 to \$2 million – is expected to be allocated toward studies such as future asset inventory assessments.

Based on preliminary scoring, the sewer application looked very competitive (mid-seventies score) due to sanitary sewer overflows, having an approved asset management plan, and the age and type of infrastructure. The water application was weaker (mid-fifties score).

Mr. English stated he met weekly with Mr. Honeycutt about these issues and emphasized not wanting to waste time given the approaching deadline. Applications are due April 30, 2026, giving about 2.5-3 weeks to complete. The asset management plan works already completed would help support these applications.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland thanked both Mr. English and Commissioner Jackson for meeting with the team, noting she had met with them the previous week and was still learning about the different options available.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Resolution 2026-07; Resolution Authorizing Application for State Loan and/or Grant Assistance for Water and Sewer Improvements – Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland – This agenda item was part of the Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) discussion in agenda item 7e.

Action: Motion to approve Resolution 2026-07; Resolution Authorizing Application for State Loan and/or Grant Assistance for Water and Sewer Improvements.

Motion by: Commissioner Cooper

Second by: Commissioner Thompson

Vote: Unanimous

b. Resolution 2026-08; Resolution Approving the Water System Asset Management Plan and Capital Improvement Plan – Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland – This agenda item was part of the Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) discussion in agenda item 7e.

Action: Motion to approve Resolution 2026-08; Resolution Approving the Water System Asset Management Plan and Capital Improvement Plan.

Motion by: Commissioner Jackson

Second by: Commissioner Burgess

Vote: Unanimous

c. Resolution 2026-09; Resolution Approving the Sewer System Asset Management Plan and Capital Improvement Plan – Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland – This agenda item was part of the Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) discussion in agenda item 7e.

Action: Motion to approve Resolution 2026-09; Resolution Approving the Sewer System Asset Management Plan and Capital Improvement Plan.

Motion by: Commissioner Cooper

Second by: Commissioner Burgess

Vote: Unanimous

d. Consulting Agreement with Superior Utilities and Consulting, LLC – Interim Town Manager Dennis English Jr. – Mr. English explained that water infrastructure had become the biggest and most important priority since he came into his position, with daily calls about leaks and ongoing expenses every time they occurred. He emphasized the need for the most trained and experienced experts to assist on a daily basis.

Mr. English brought forward what he called "The A Team" to address water infrastructure strategically and tactically. These individuals would work with the Town until they hired a Director of Water Operations.

Glenn McFadden from Meyers Engineering explained he had been serving as the Town's Operating Responsible in Charge (ORC) for about 18 months. He praised the Town's water and sewer system as strong but needing TLC, noting it was similar to other Towns across America. He emphasized the importance of having a roadmap through the asset inventory plan.

Mr. McFadden discussed the challenge of training staff, noting that water system work couldn't be learned just by explanation – each leak repair situation was different with various nuances. He introduced his team members with extensive experience.

John Cannon introduced himself, explaining he started his career with the City of Raleigh as a laborer and retired after 31 years, with about 40 total years of experience. He expressed interest in working with Spring Lake's good people, noting he had never reinvented the wheel but listened to people smarter than him. His goal was to fast-forward the learning process for Town staff and show them shortcuts while addressing issues with both sewer and water systems.

Ricky Byrd was introduced as an excellent equipment operator who had worked with Mr. Cannon in tough situations. Mr. Cannon emphasized they wanted to come in and teach staff proper procedures safely.

Joe Gardner discussed his business background and noted the significant water loss issue – roughly 50% water loss costing over \$60,000 monthly in water that was either lost or not being metered. He mentioned the aging meters (around 25 years old versus the typical 10-12-year lifespan) and suggested looking at a schedule to replace meters to increase revenue.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland expressed concern about water loss affecting taxpayers and potentially causing high bills for citizens, thanking the team for their information and commitment to training.

Clerk Autry noted that Attorney Porter recommended adding pre-audit certification and possibly placing a cap on funds, requiring Board approval before exceeding any cap.

Mr. Overton explained they had set a maximum of \$50,000, which had already been appropriated in a previous budget amendment.

Commissioner Cooper inquired whether the previously discussed cap of \$50,000 should be explicitly included in the agreement. Ms. Autry responded that a specific dollar amount could be incorporated into the agreement. Mr. Overton stated that the Town Attorney would make any necessary revisions to include that provision. Commissioner Cooper further noted that the cap should also be reflected in the motion.

Action: Motion to approve the Consulting Agreement with Superior Utilities and Consulting, LLC with \$50,000 being placed as a cap on funds.

Motion by: Commissioner Thompson

Second by: Commissioner Jackson

Vote: Unanimous

e. Budget Amendment (BA-19) FY2026 – Finance Director James Overton – Mr. Overton explained this budget amendment simply moved money around within several departments without increasing any department budgets or the total budget. The Town Manager had authority to move money within departments as long as the total wasn't changed. They were adding funding to the police department for training due to their low budget, and addressing costs related to water leaks and February snow events.

Action: Motion to approve Budget Amendment (BA-19) FY2026.

Motion by: Commissioner Jackson

Second by: Commissioner Cooper

Vote: Unanimous

f. Budget Amendment (BA-20) FY2026 – Finance Director James Overton – Mr. Overton explained they had an \$800,000 Grant from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to repair Regina Drive and Mack Street sewer lines. When bid out, the project came in at \$1.6 million, double the Grant amount. They decided to prioritize Regina Drive as it was in worse condition than Mack Street.

The contract was awarded to SKC, Inc. for \$574,000 to fix the Regina Drive sewer line. During excavation, they discovered the water line was also in disrepair and could eventually fail. Since it was close to and in the way of the sewer line repair, engineers recommended replacing both lines simultaneously to avoid having to dig up the street again in the future.

The additional change order was \$214,000 to repair the water line, plus the \$574,000 for sewer, totaling about \$800,000 and using all Grant money. This meant no money would be left for Mack Street, but Mack Street was included in the Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) plan.

Action: Motion to approve Budget Amendment (BA-20) FY2026.

Motion by: Commissioner Cooper

Second by: Commissioner Thompson

Vote: Unanimous

g. Budget Amendment (BA-21) FY2026 – Finance Director James Overton – Mr. Overton explained their street sweeper had been involved in an accident as another driver ran into it. The other driver's insurance company had agreed to pay for damages and would pursue the other driver for reimbursement.

The Town had obtained four (4) bids for a new street sweeper. The lowest bid was from Amick Equipment Company for a 10-post street sweeper at \$220,000. This sweeper was smaller than some others and was a demo unit that had been demonstrated to three (3) Towns including Spring Lake. The company requested to demonstrate to two (2) more Towns, but Spring Lake would commit to buying it first. Because it was used as a demo, the Town will receive a discount.

Mr. Overton noted they hadn't swept streets in several months due to the broken street sweeper and needed to do so to keep storm drains clean.

Action: Motion to approve Budget Amendment (BA-21) FY2026.

Motion by: Commissioner Thompson

Second by: Commissioner Burgess

Vote: Unanimous

h. Certificate of Sufficiency, Jackson Property – Town Clerk Carly Autry – Clerk Autry explained that at the last Board meeting, the Board approved a Resolution for her to conduct a sufficiency report and feasibility study. She had completed this work and everything was as petitioned by Ms. Rhonda Jackson.

The property was currently zoned R-10, but the applicant was seeking rezoning to C-3 conditional. They would need to work with Cumberland County regarding the conditional zoning and a meeting has been scheduled for the next day to ensure approval.

The property currently had two (2) vacant homes with no residents. Fire protection, police protection, and sanitation services would be adequate. Water services were already provided, but sewer services were not connected, though a sewer line was available. The applicant would need to pay a fee to tap into the sewer system.

i. Resolution 2026-10; A Resolution Fixing Date of Public Hearing on Question of Annexation Pursuant to G.S. §160A-31 and Related Rezoning Development Considerations – Town Clerk Carly Autry – Clerk Autry explained she would not post the public notice until Tuesday, April 27, 2026, because she wanted to ensure her information was correct from Cumberland County regarding the rezoning request. Once she received that information from the next day's meeting, she would bring it back to the next Board meeting. The Resolution would schedule the Public Hearing for Monday, May 11, 2026, with the notice required to be published in the paper no less than ten (10) days and no more than 25 days beforehand.

Action: Motion to approve Resolution 2026-10; A Resolution Fixing Date of Public Hearing on Question of Annexation Pursuant to G.S. §160A-31 and Related Rezoning Development Considerations.

Motion by: Commissioner Jackson
Second by: Commissioner Cooper
Vote: Unanimous

j. Manchester Elementary – Commissioner Jackie Jackson – Commissioner Jackson reported that she and others had been attending Board of Education (BOE) meetings regarding the closure of Manchester Elementary School. She was disturbed at the last meeting when a BOE member stated one (1) reason for closing the school was because they didn't see growth in Spring Lake, claiming there was no more growth. Commissioner Jackson emphasized this was untrue.

Commissioner Jackson noted that a young gentleman had provided figures showing the student numbers the BOE had were incorrect. With a BOE meeting scheduled for the next day (the last meeting before the April 27, 2026 forum), the BOE had concluded that the Town needed to step up in opposition.

Commissioner Jackson explained the April 27, 2026, date was for a Public Forum that the community had been demanding. The school board had initially tried to close the school without the Public Forum, but now it would be held at Manchester Elementary. She encouraged everyone to attend, noting doors would open at 6:00 pm but suggesting arrival at 5:00 pm. She mentioned there would be police on hand and could have signs posted opposing the school closure.

Commissioner Jackson stated that the Board had also discussed instructing the Town Attorney to send a formal notice expressing opposition to the proposed school closures. Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland requested consensus from the Board to proceed with having the Town Attorney transmit a formal letter. A show of hands indicated consensus. **Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland confirmed that the Board would move forward with directing the Town Attorney to draft a letter opposing the school closure.**

Commissioner Jackson emphasized this was good for Spring Lake because she hadn't heard of any other Town or district where the Board was stepping up to take care of their school system, which the school board wouldn't be used to seeing. She thanked citizens who had been there from day one, those who wanted to come but couldn't due to work, and those who prayed for them.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland emphasized the importance of education and working closely with the community. She noted that some churches had contacted Ms. Chadwick because it affected the whole family.

k. Resolution 2026-11; A Resolution Expressing Opposition by the Town of Spring Lake Board of Commissioners to the Proposed Closure of Manchester Elementary School – Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland – This item was discussed and followed by agenda item 8j. Manchester Elementary.

Action: Motion to approve Resolution 2026-11; A Resolution Expressing Opposition by the Town of Spring Lake Board of Commissioners to the Proposed Closure of Manchester Elementary School.

Motion by: Commissioner Cooper
Second by: Commissioner Burgess
Vote: Unanimous

I. Mayor's Report – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony was not present at the meeting.

m. Board of Commissioners Report – Spring Lake Board of Commissioners – First, Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland expressed appreciation to those in attendance and thanked the community for the opportunity to serve. She affirmed his continued commitment to serving the Town of Spring Lake in both his ministerial role and as Mayor Pro Tem. She emphasized the importance of unity, collaboration, and ongoing learning among Board members and the community, noting that residents live in and invest in the Town and desire improved infrastructure and overall quality of life. Last, Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland further acknowledged the value of public input, stating that comments made during the meeting would be taken into consideration. She highlighted the importance of working together toward shared goals, recognizing both experienced individuals and the need for collective effort, and noted that elected officials serve at the will of the citizens. She concluded by reaffirming his commitment to representing and advocating for the residents of Spring Lake and again expressed her appreciation. First, Commissioner Thompson mentioned the Military Banners Program and announced that flags would be flown for a loved one, with the application deadline on Friday, April 17, 2026. Flags would be flown from Flag Day in May until Veterans Day in November. Second, Commissioner Thompson announced a health event on Saturday, April 18, 2026, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at 1235 Ramsey Street, offering \$5 rabies shots for animals, flu and COVID shots for adults, and STI testing. Third, Commissioner Thompson mentioned a health and wellness fair at the Spring Lake Citizens Building on Wednesday, April 15, 2026, from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm, open to everyone. Last, Commissioner Thompson expressed appreciation to Mr. Charles for his participation in the recent community cleanup held on the first Saturday of the month, noting that they were the only individuals in attendance. She encouraged other residents to participate in future cleanup efforts to help maintain the appearance of the Town. First, Commissioner Jackson reminded everyone about the school Board meeting the next day and the Monday, April 27, 2026, Public Forum at Manchester Elementary. Second, Commissioner Jackson thanked Mr. English for his work, noting he had been "on a roll" and she had seen his efforts. Last, Commissioner Jackson announced a baby giveaway hosted by the Spring Lake Community Support Center on Saturday, April 18, 2026, at 10:00 am at Burgess Boxing, free to the public for anyone needing baby clothes. First, Commissioner Burgess thanked everyone in attendance for coming out and announced the Appearance Committee was having a Town cleanup on Saturday, April 18, 2026, at 9:00 am located at 245 Ruth Street. Second, Commissioner Burgess stated the Appearance Committee will be doing an unveiling of the mural located at Boyd's Gifts & Engraving sometime in May. Third, Commissioner Burgess stated that the Town is actively working to address issues related to blighted properties and is coordinating efforts with the Police Department. Last, Commissioner Burgess expressed appreciation to Mr. English for his continued hard work and emphasized that the Board is working collaboratively and making progress moving forward. Commissioner Cooper thanked everyone for coming out and specifically thanked the Town for flowers, a card, and Resolution for her uncle Alexander Lucas (also known as Buck), who had passed away at age 94 after living a great life.

n. Manager's Report – Interim Town Manager Dennis English Jr. – Mr. English provided a comprehensive report on several key areas:

Audit Update: Mr. English emphasized transparency regarding outstanding audits, noting continued weekly coordination meetings with Cherry Bekaert. During the process, it became necessary to report FEMA-related funds, extending the audit timeline. The revised completion date for the 2021 audit was

projected for the end of April. The Town remains committed to maintaining transparency and bringing all audits current as quickly as possible.

Budget Process: All departmental budget requests were received and were moving into the next phase. He would schedule a Special Meeting for the Governing Body to discuss the budget. Key milestones included: May 1, 2026 proposed budget submittal to Local Government Commission (LGC); May 22, 2026 – Public Hearing advertisement for June 8, 2026; June 8, 2026 at 6:00 pm – Public Hearing for fiscal year 2027 proposed budget; June 22, 2026, at 6:00 pm – adoption of final Budget Ordinance, Capital Improvement Plan, and Fee Schedule.

Personnel Recruitment: The Town is actively working to strengthen the leadership team and operational capacity. Recruitment efforts were underway for a Public Works Director and Human Resources Manager, critical roles for improving service delivery and organizational efficiency.

Water Infrastructure and Regional Collaboration: The Town has held initial meetings with Harnett Regional Water to evaluate merger/regionalization feasibility, an important step toward identifying long-term solutions for system sustainability, efficiency, and service reliability.

Legislative Engagement: The Town has met with their legislative delegation to formally present and advocate for the Town's water infrastructure needs, essential for pursuing funding opportunities in the upcoming short session of the General Assembly.

Strategic Focus Areas: Focus Area 1 (safe, reliable, sustainable water, sewer, and stormwater systems) had convened meetings with key stakeholders, with Commissioner Jackson spearheading efforts. Focus Area 2 (revitalizing Town infrastructure) would meet with Commissioner Burgess on the Tuesday, April 21, 2026.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland thanked Mr. English for mentioning the audit situation and his work in contacting attorneys and auditors to get needed information. She noted the importance of having up-to-date audits for potential future loans and praised the forward movement on this issue.

o. Town Attorney Report – Town Attorney Michael Porter – Attorney Porter was not present at the meeting.

9. CLOSED SESSION

Action: Motion to approve to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(3) – Attorney-Client Privilege.

Motion by: Commissioner Jackson

Second by: Commissioner Thompson

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Motion to approve to come back into Open Session. Action was taken.

Motion by: Commissioner Thompson

Second by: Commissioner Cooper

Vote: Unanimous

Action: Motion to approve to change the Monday, April 27, 2026, Board of Commissioners meeting from 6:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

Motion by: Commissioner Jackson

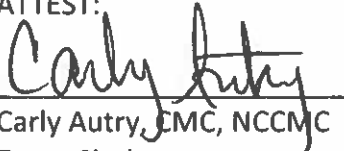
Second by: Commissioner Burgess

Vote: Unanimous


10. ADJOURNMENT

Action: There being no further business to come before the Board, Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland adjourned the meeting at 8:39 pm.

ATTEST:


Carly Autry, EMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk




Kia Anthony
Mayor