

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

May 11, 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 Kia Anthony presiding.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Pro Tem Fredricka Sutherland via telephone  
Commissioner Tony Burgess  
Commissioner Soñia L. Cooper  
Commissioner Jackie Jackson  
Commissioner Adrian Thomspon

**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  
Michael Porter, Town Attorney  
Officer Jared Truman, Town of Spring Lake Police Department  
Steve Wing, Building Superintendent

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Police Chief Errol Jarman gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS**

Mayor Anthony requested to add Discussion Regarding Health Insurance Increase under New Business.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Second by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Vote:** Unanimous

**5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS**

**Action:** Motion to approve draft minutes of April 13, 2026, Regular Meeting, draft minutes of April 20, 2026, Special Meeting, draft minutes of April 27, 2026, Work Session, and draft minutes of May 1, 2026, Special Meeting.

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

## 6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mary Jackson, Spring Lake resident, addressed the Board regarding the removal of kiosks. She asked whether the Town had publicly evaluated if the kiosks were actually serving residents as intended. Ms. Jackson noted that many families, seniors, and military personnel were affected. She respectfully requested that the Board publicly release kiosk usage logistics, vendor costs, and operational reports.

Sean Brigner, Spring Lake resident, reminded everyone that the final vote regarding Manchester Elementary was scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday, May 12, 2026, and noted that the timeline and related information had already been released. He encouraged everyone to continue attending and staying involved throughout the process. Mr. Brigner stated that several positive news articles had been published regarding the efforts surrounding the matter and expressed appreciation for the continued support and attendance from the community. He further stated that he planned to attend again and continue addressing concerns and unanswered questions related to the matter. Mr. Brigner encouraged everyone to continue showing support by attending and inviting others to participate as well.

## 7. PRESENTATIONS

a. Town Manager Search, Council-Manager Form of Government – Joe Durham & Harold Own, North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) – Mr. Durham explained that he and Mr. Owen were Municipal Operations Consultants providing technical assistance to Towns. He emphasized the importance of being open and transparent during the Manager search process. Mr. Durham noted that the Town would conduct the process, which could be done by selecting a point person or committee. He explained it was a confidential process that could be either internal or external, and that Towns could lead internally or hire a consultant.

Mr. Durham reviewed the Council-Manager form of government, noting that 97% of North Carolina municipalities operate under this system. He outlined the Manager's duties and responsibilities, including attending all meetings, enforcing laws, preparing the annual budget, and submitting annual reports to the Council.

Mr. Durham discussed the importance of hiring a manager who is a member of the International City County Management Association (ICMA), which holds Managers to a Code of Ethics. He emphasized that hiring a Town Manager is the most important decision the Board will make, as this person manages day-to-day operations.

The presentation covered developing a candidate profile, including desired qualifications such as a Master's Degree in Public Administration, years of experience, and ICMA credentials. Mr. Durham explained that the entire process could take several months, including application review, screening, and selection.

Mr. Durham discussed salary ranges, noting that competitive ranges from the previous year were \$110,000 to \$120,000, though these figures would need updating. He outlined various publication venues for job postings, including ICMA website, local newspapers, and social media platforms.

The screening process could involve the full elected Board reviewing applications, a committee narrowing candidates to 2-3 finalists, or hiring a search firm. Mr. Durham emphasized the confidential nature of the process due to many applicants already having jobs.

Mr. Durham noted there were approximately 40-50 Manager vacancies across the state, making it a competitive market where candidates also evaluate Towns. Video conferencing for initial interviews had become popular, with final interviews conducted in person.

Mr. Durham stressed the importance of unanimous Board consensus on the selected candidate and discussed background checks, reference verification, and the possibility of public forums with final candidates.

Mayor Anthony thanked Mr. Durham and Mr. Owen and asked about assistance with updating the job description, noting the Town currently lacked an HR Clerk. Mr. Durham confirmed the League could help with job description updates and provide compensation ranges based on budget, population, and comparable positions.

Commissioner Cooper thanked Mr. Durham and Mr. Owen, noting they had previously helped the Town develop its strategic plan and expressing appreciation for their continued support.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarification that any changes related to compensation would require Board approval and that no changes would be made without a Board vote. Mr. Durham responded that he would not make any changes independently and stated that he was only providing information for the Board's consideration. He further stated that while suggestions or recommendations may be presented from time to time, all related decisions would ultimately be made by the Board.

Mayor Anthony encouraged residents to obtain copies of the presentation if they didn't receive the full agenda packet, emphasizing the importance of understanding how the Town operates.

## **8. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

a. ZON-26-0011: Rezoning Request from O&I Office and Institutional District to R-6 Residential District or to a more restrictive zoning district for two (2) parcels containing approximately 0.73 acres; located on the southwest corner of Elizabeth St and John St. submitted by Drafting and Design Services, Inc. (Agent/Applicant) on behalf of Kingdom Community Development corporation (Owner). – Richard Fagan, Planner II, Cumberland County Planning & Inspections – Mr. Fagan explained the intent was to demolish the existing structure and develop single-family residential units. The property previously contained a single-family home that had been demolished, along with undeveloped wooded areas. Surrounding uses included single-family residential, manufactured homes, multifamily residential, and the Spring Lake Recreation Center.

Mr. Fagan described the surrounding zoning districts and noted there were no hydric soils on the property, with water and sewer services available along both John Street and Elizabeth Street. The property sat within the Spring Lake Area Land Use Plan with a high-density residential designation, making the request consistent with the adopted Land Use Plan.

Mr. Fagan showed photographs of the subject property and surrounding areas, noting the structure had been demolished. Staff recommended approval of the rezoning request.

Mayor Anthony declared the Public Hearing open for **ZON-26-0011**.

Mayor Anthony three (3) times called for any persons in favor regarding **ZON-26-0011**, which there were two (2).

Michael Blakely, Sanford, spoke as the representative of the applicant. He stated that housing development had already been completed on properties to the east and west of the area and that the current project would continue development along Elizabeth Street. He further stated that there were future plans for additional housing development at Warfield and Elizabeth Streets. Mr. Blakely noted that Kingdom Development had previously completed 14 homes in the community, that the current project would add three (3) additional homes, and that seven (7) more homes were planned for the Elizabeth and Warfield area. He stated that the projects were intended to revitalize the area and replace older homes.

Mayor Anthony stated it was important to recognize the number of new homes being developed while the community was also advocating to keep the school open.

Bettye Sanford, Spring Lake resident, stated that while the additional housing was positive for the community, she believed the prices of the apartments and houses were too expensive and should be reduced to make them more affordable for residents. She further commented that along Chapel Hill Road there appeared to be occupied apartment units and questioned how long the apartments had been available.

Mayor Anthony reminded to remain on the topic under discussion.

Mayor Anthony three (3) times called for any persons in opposition regarding **ZON-26-0011**, which there were none, however, Crystal Johnson, Spring Lake resident, addressed questions regarding the case.

Ms. Johnson asked why small portions of property near the splash pad were frequently being purchased. Mayor Anthony responded that the question would need to be directed to the property owners or their agent.

Ms. Johnson then asked whether the rezoning would affect future commercial development opportunities in the area, such as a funeral home or other commercial uses. Mayor Anthony reminded that comments should relate to speaking in favor of or against the request, but explained that once the zoning was changed to residential, commercial development would no longer be permitted on the property. Mayor

Anthony further stated that the property was currently zoned for Office and Industrial uses, but the proposed rezoning would allow residential use instead.

Mayor Anthony declared the Public Hearing closed for **ZON-26-0011**.

b. 945 Lillington Highway Annexation, Arthur L. Jackson & Rhonda Jackson – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony noted that the annexation Public Hearing notice was published in the Fayetteville Observer on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. She explained that the Board will conduct the required Public Hearing and the petition met the requirements of NCGS §160A-31, with no opposition found and the Board finding the petition valid in every respect.

Clerk Autry provided background information, noting that everything appeared in order and that Craig Duerr was present on behalf of the agent for any questions or concerns.

Mayor Anthony declared the Public Hearing open for **945 Lillington Highway**.

Mayor Anthony three (3) times called for any persons in favor regarding **945 Lillington Highway**, which there was one (1).

Craig Duerr, Cary, identified himself as the representative of the applicant who filed the annexation petition on behalf of the property owner as an authorized agent. He explained the need to annex into the city to move forward with future rezoning, noting this was step one of a two-step process with plans to return in August for rezoning. The annexation would allow connection to existing water and sewer infrastructure.

Mayor Anthony three (3) times called for any persons in opposition regarding **945 Lillington Highway**, which there were none.

Mayor Anthony declared the Public Hearing closed for **945 Lillington Highway**.

## **9. OLD BUSINESS**

a. Consideration of Cell Phone Service and Device Changes – Interim Town Manager Dennis English Jr. – Mr. English explained that since the last meeting, which was Monday, April 27, 2026, they had discussed transitioning from the app-based phone system to actual cell phones. He asked the Town Clerk to provide recommendations.

Clerk Autry reported that she had contacted Verizon, with service costing \$36.99 per line. New hardware could be provided at no additional cost for Board members electing new devices. She noted that old devices could be sold to a previous vendor that purchased used cellphones.

Mayor Anthony expressed support for the change as long as it didn't cost the Town money or provided cost savings. However, she emphasized the need for a policy to govern this decision rather than leaving it open-ended. She noted there was a policy for Town staff but not for the Board.

Commissioner Jackson questioned whether cellphones had to be sold as surplus, citing information from the previous meeting. Clerk Autry clarified that items under \$30,000 did not require surplus procedures, though they could follow surplus procedures to maintain normal practices.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland referenced previous discussions about Board members having separate phones. Clerk Autry confirmed there was no statute requiring Board members to have separate phones.

Commissioner Jackson asked what the current policy was regarding Board cell phones. Mayor Anthony stated that there was currently no policy in place specifically for the Board. Mayor Anthony explained that there had previously been a cell phone policy within the employee handbook, but it only applied to staff and did not include the Board. Mayor Anthony further stated that adopting a policy would provide options for Board members, including the ability to choose between receiving a device or utilizing an application on a personal device.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether the Board would determine the policy or if a proposed policy would be prepared for their consideration. Commissioner Jackson further stated that the matter could potentially be finalized at the next meeting and acknowledged that the Board would need to discuss the policy in Open Session.

Mayor Anthony reiterated that the decision should be policy-driven rather than ad hoc, allowing options for both device acquisition and app usage. She suggested staff draft a policy for Board review and approval.

Commissioner Cooper clarified that the previous change was budget-driven rather than policy-driven, explaining that the transition to apps occurred because it was cheaper than providing cellphones, especially since staff members received \$50 stipends for phone usage while cellphone service cost only \$36.99.

Commissioner Jackson requested to see documentation showing the cost comparison between apps and cellphones, wanting to verify whether cellphones were actually cheaper considering the \$50 stipends provided to staff.

Clerk Autry explained that the app transition occurred when the Town changed time-tracking systems, requiring staff to use their personal cellphones for clocking in and out, which led to providing stipends instead of Town-issued cellphones.

Attorney Porter clarified that the previous T-Mobile dispute affected staff cellphones, but the current discussion only involved Board cellphones, which represented a much smaller contract. He stated that when the Town transitioned to the current system, the Board at that time elected to utilize the app along with staff, although he did not recall the exact details or numbers involved. Attorney Porter further stated that nothing prevented the current Board from choosing a different option and that the Board ultimately had the authority to decide how it wished to proceed regarding cell phone use and devices.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland suggested making a motion to move forward since the Board had authority to make decisions.

Mayor Anthony emphasized that local government should operate by policy rather than individual decisions, ensuring coverage and proper procedures. She proposed that staff draft a policy, submit it to Board members via email for review, then bring it back for discussion and vote at the next meeting.

**The Board reached consensus to direct staff to draft a cellphone policy for Board consideration.**

b. Discussion Regarding Kiosk Removal – Mayor Kia Anthony – Mayor Anthony explained that this item was tabled from the April 27, 2026, Work Session. The Town Clerk had been requested to research whether kiosk removal constituted day-to-day operational matters or required Board involvement, particularly given associated costs.

Clerk Autry's findings determined that while the Town Manager had authority over day-to-day operations, the kiosks were implemented pursuant to a Board-approved budget amendment and executed contract. Any action to remove or discontinue their use, particularly if it impacted contract obligations or Town expenditures, should be brought before the Board for review and direction to ensure alignment with prior Board actions and mitigate potential financial or legal risks.

Mayor Anthony noted that a contract was approved by the Board on Monday, April 14, 2025. The Clerk had also consulted the School of Government (SOG), which agreed with her findings that Board approval was needed for removal since the Board had approved the budget and contract.

The contract terms included a 3-year term with options for annual renewals for additional four (4) years, totaling up to seven (7) years if renewed. The annual subscription cost was \$1,500, with termination requiring 90-day written notice. Terminating without cause in the first three (3) years would incur an additional \$1,000 penalty.

The kiosks themselves cost \$25,000 each, with total installation costs of \$78,000, and were installed in November 2025.

Commissioner Jackson asked for clarification about the contract language regarding "removal," questioning whether it referred to complete removal or relocation from place to place. She emphasized that only one (1) kiosk was moved, not removed entirely, and requested a copy of the contract. Commissioner Jackson stated that the Town should have authority to relocate kiosks to better serve citizens, noting that one kiosk had only 10-15 users in six (6) months while the other remained useful.

Commissioner Jackson explained that moving the kiosk could provide better access for citizens, such as allowing people to pay bills while shopping rather than making special trips to the Water Department. She suggested that relocation costs might be worthwhile for long-term benefits.

Attorney Porter clarified that "removal" was just the word used previously and didn't carry special legal significance. The key point was that if the Town decided not to use the kiosks at all, there would be contractual ramifications.

Commissioner Thompson noted that the original reason for kiosk installation was budget cuts in the Water Department, providing cost savings to the Town.

Mayor Anthony elaborated that the kiosks were implemented due to budgetary constraints when the previous Manager faced the choice of closing the payment window completely due to lack of staffing funds or finding an alternative. The kiosk represented a one-time payment of \$78,000 versus ongoing employee costs of approximately \$78,000 annually, while still providing service access that citizens had always enjoyed.

Commissioner Jackson requested a budget analysis showing the actual savings or losses associated with the kiosk implementation, including consideration of the user fees charged for kiosk transactions that were not applied to payments made at the customer service window. Mayor Anthony stated that she would like for the Board to direct the Town Manager to provide the requested information.

Commissioner Cooper noted that credit card payments through the window also included fees similar to kiosk fees, which was why she switched to direct payment. She emphasized that six (6) months wasn't sufficient time to evaluate kiosk effectiveness, as businesses need time to become established and for people to learn about the service. Commissioner Cooper felt the kiosk should have been discussed with the full Board before being moved from the Water Department location.

Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland suggested keeping the kiosks in Spring Lake but soliciting citizen input on better locations. She proposed reopening the payment window and holding a Public Forum to determine optimal kiosk placement, while noting the Town was budgeting to staff the Water Department properly to serve all citizens regardless of age.

Mayor Anthony clarified that kiosk positioning decisions fell within the Manager's authority, not the Board's purview. The Board's only concern was the cost implications. She noted that involving the community in location decisions would be at the Manager's discretion.

Mayor Anthony emphasized current budget constraints, explaining that reopening the payment window would create ongoing costs the Town couldn't currently afford. She compared the situation to household budgeting, where temporary sacrifices might be necessary until financial stability improved. She stressed the importance of maintaining Fund Balance reserves for emergencies like storm damage.

Mayor Anthony noted the Town was experiencing its first full budget cycle after losing \$1.8 million in revenue, making every expenditure decision critical. She supported finding better kiosk locations but emphasized the need for responsible financial management.

Commissioner Cooper added that given struggles to maintain Police and Fire Department staffing, with five (5) police positions lost due to budget cuts, she preferred investing in public safety over payment window convenience.

Commissioner Jackson stated that she was confident the Board would make budget decisions based on what was in the best interest of both the community and the Town. She further stated that the Board was willing to consider reductions to its own expenditures if necessary, including expenses related to training and similar items, in order to address budget needs.

## 10. NEW BUSINESS

a. ZON-26-0011: Rezoning Request from O&I Office and Institutional District to R-6 Residential District or to a more restrictive zoning district for two (2) parcels containing approximately 0.73 acres; located on the southwest corner of Elizabeth St and John St. submitted by Drafting and Design Services, Inc. (Agent/Applicant) on behalf of Kingdom Community Development corporation (Owner). – Mayor Kia Anthony – This agenda item was part of the Public Hearing discussion in agenda item 8a.

**Action:** Motion to approve ZON-26-0011: Rezoning Request from O&I Office and Institutional District to R-6 Residential District or to a more restrictive zoning district for two (2) parcels containing approximately 0.73 acres; located on the southwest corner of Elizabeth St and John St. submitted by Drafting and Design Services, Inc. (Agent/Applicant) on behalf of Kingdom Community Development corporation (Owner).

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Second by:** Commissioner Burgess

**Vote:** Unanimous

b. Ordinance 2026-2; An Ordinance to Extend the Corporate Limits of the Town of Spring Lake, North Carolina, 945 Lillington Highway – Mayor Kia Anthony – This agenda item was part of the Public Hearing discussion in agenda item 8b.

**Action:** Motion to approve Ordinance 2026-2; An Ordinance to Extend the Corporate Limits of the Town of Spring Lake, North Carolina, 945 Lillington Highway.

**Motion by:** Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland

**Second by:** Commissioner Burgess

**Vote:** Unanimous

c. Budget Amendment (BA-23) FY2026 – Finance Director James Overton – Mr. Overton presented Budget Amendment (BA-23), explaining several components. First, he requested \$6,000 for PlanIt software to create a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). While the Town had a CIP for water and sewer prepared by engineers, they lacked plans for other buildings, equipment, and vehicles.

The software cost \$6,000 for the first year under a 3-year contract, then \$5,500 for the following two (2) years with renewal options. Mr. Overton explained they could pay for the software next year by eliminating unused Harris software programs for payroll and capital assets, since they had switched to ADP.

Mr. Overton noted that declining interest rates (from 5% to 3.75%) had reduced the Town's checking account earnings, resulting in higher bank service charges. He requested \$1,500 to cover increased bank service charges for the remainder of the year.

Both expenses would be funded by reducing professional services, as they had budgeted for three (3) years of auditing but would only complete one (1) year.

The major component involved Street Department equipment purchases. They requested an asphalt pot trailer for heating and spreading asphalt, which they currently lacked. Two (2) quotes were obtained: \$71,000 and \$80,000.

The second equipment request was for a lift bucket truck. They currently rented lifts when needed for hanging banners, Christmas decorations, and tree trimming. Two (2) quotes were provided: \$37,800 and \$39,500.

Mr. Overton requested moving \$100,000 from street maintenance and repair to Capital Outlay equipment, funded by the Highland Paving street resurfacing contract coming in under budget. He noted that \$111,000 total was needed for both equipment purchases.

Regarding Powell Bill funds, Mr. Overton explained they currently had almost \$1.7 million in Powell Bill funds but couldn't accumulate more than five (5) years' worth. They needed to spend funds before June 30, 2026, to maintain eligibility for \$350,000 next year. A backup generator was already on order and would be paid from Powell Bill funds.

Mayor Anthony expressed enthusiasm for the PlanIt software, particularly its ability to create informational booklets for the Board and public about CIPs. She noted the importance of having proper Capital Improvement Planning.

Commissioner Burgess asked about existing bucket truck equipment. Public Works staff, Steve Wing approached the podium and confirmed they had to sell their previous 1990 bucket truck after its computer system caught fire and replacement parts became unavailable.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether the funding for the equipment being requested would come from the Powell Bill funds. Mr. Overton confirmed that the funding source was the Powell Bill. Commissioner Jackson further stated that the funds would need to be spent in order to avoid losing the ability to receive similar funding the following year. Mr. Overton confirmed her understanding.

**Action:** Motion to approve Budget Amendment (BA-23) FY2026.

**Motion by:** Commissioner Cooper

**Second by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Vote:** Unanimous

d. PWC Agreement – Interim Town Manager Dennis English Jr. – Mr. English explained he and the Board had just received the PWC contract approximately two (2) hours before the meeting. He indicated the

agreement would not be discussed in detail until the Town Attorney was able to review it, but noted it would provide savings to the Town by transitioning from a tiered system to a bulk system agreement.

Mayor Anthony confirmed the Board wouldn't make any decisions until they had adequate time to review the contract.

e. Discussion Regarding Health Insurance Increase – Interim Town Manager Dennis English Jr. – Mr. Overton reported that insurance companies typically don't reveal increases until the last minute due to fear of large claims near year-end. They had expected a 15-22% increase and budgeted for 20%, but the actual increase was 26%.

The medical insurance cost would increase from \$653 to \$823 per employee, exceeding what the Town paid two (2) years ago with Blue Cross Blue Shield. Dental insurance would increase 8.5% from \$33 to \$36 monthly, while vision insurance would remain at \$5.58 with the same plan.

An alternative vision plan at \$6.14 monthly would increase glasses coverage from \$125 to \$150. The medical insurance increase would add \$39,000 to the budget, with dental adding another \$2,800, totaling approximately \$42,000 in additional costs.

Mr. Overton explained they had contacted Olde Fayetteville insurance agency, which was reaching out to UnitedHealthcare and Blue Cross Blue Shield for better rates. He noted the Town couldn't afford a 26% increase after only one (1) year with UnitedHealthcare.

Mr. Overton mentioned an alternative agent, Zach Crumpler, who had found significant savings the previous year with UnitedHealthcare. He asked whether to have Olde Fayetteville shop for insurance or give Mr. Crumpler another opportunity.

Mayor Anthony questioned the appropriateness of having their current provider shop for alternatives, suggesting potential bias. Mr. Overton stated Mr. Crumpler is a licensed insurance agent who sells health insurance and could contact insurance providers on the Town's behalf. He stated that there were only a limited number of insurance companies available, including Blue Cross, UnitedHealthcare, Cigna, and Aetna. Mr. Overton further stated that he would like to see Olde Fayetteville take a more proactive approach in seeking cost savings for the Town, rather than waiting until significant rate increases occurred before exploring alternative options.

Attorney Porter clarified they didn't need to sign contracts with agents just to obtain quotes.

Mr. Overton emphasized the need for a designated insurance agent to avoid having multiple agents competing. He noted that the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) had exited the health insurance business due to small Town challenges.

Mr. English indicated he would explore opportunities for savings and report back to the Board.

f. Mayor's Report – Mayor Kia Anthony – First, Mayor Anthony acknowledged the internal farewell gathering for Lt. Danny Sutton, who had served the Town for 20 years before transferring to Fayetteville, noting his presence would be missed. Second, Mayor Anthony described the CityVision conference attendance by most Board members and the Interim Town Manager, explaining that CityVision provides professional development for elected officials with legislative updates and networking opportunities. Classes covered topics from interacting with Town Managers to handling difficult governmental situations. Third, Mayor Anthony announced she had received a Certificate of Municipal Excellence, as had Commissioner Cooper, for diligent study and commitment to learning better governance. Fourth, Mayor Anthony mentioned an upcoming invitation to Ft. Bragg's Defense Community Infrastructure Summit on the May 14, 2026, focusing on critical infrastructure capacity including human resources, data security, and cyber-attacks affecting community resilience and Ft. Bragg capabilities. Fifth, Mayor Anthony stated the Cumberland County Mayors' Coalition meeting was scheduled for the May 15, 2026, bringing together County Mayors quarterly to discuss regional issues. Sixth, Mayor Anthony described the Deerfield water outage that occurred while most Elected Officials and the Manager were away, complicated by simultaneous phone and internet issues. A phone line installed over water lines had finally collapsed, crushing the water main and causing flooding. Staff responded immediately, but repairs caused water flow into other damaged pipes, resulting in valve failures and extended hours without water to Deerfield while crews worked around the clock. She emphasized this wasn't random service disruption but infrastructure failure from aging systems, stressing the need for the \$80 million infrastructure improvement program being pursued by Commissioner Jackson's Focus Group. Seventh, Mayor Anthony announced that splash pads were open. Eighth, Mayor Anthony reported receiving a \$1.5 million Grant for Mutzberg Park rehabilitation. The 33-acre park off Chapel Hill Road featured walking trails and scenic Little River overlooks. The funding came through state Greenway Trails programs via FAMPO. Ninth, Mayor Anthony noted the School Board meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday, May 12, 2026. Tenth, Mayor Anthony confirmed that work logs from Mr. English would soon begin. Last, Mayor Anthony discussed the North Carolina League of Municipalities' "Commit to Civility" program. She explained that the program consisted of a two-hour course requiring participation by at least 75% of the Board and would result in the adoption of a Resolution declaring the Board's commitment to civil governance, along with recognition from the State.

g. Board of Commissioners Report – Spring Lake Board of Commissioners – Mayor Pro Tem Sutherland expressed appreciation for the CityVision conference experience. She enjoyed the classes and networking opportunities, emphasizing the value of continuing education for better service to the Town. First, Commissioner Thompson reported attending the State of Ft. Bragg presentation, which provided information about the installation's future and plans for surrounding cities. Second, Commissioner Thompson stated she attended the National Day of Service sponsored by the Spring Lake Ministry Alliance at First Baptist Church. Third, Commissioner Thompson announced the Memorial Day ceremony scheduled for Friday, May 22, 2026, at 11:00 am at Veterans Park, with indoor alternatives at Town Hall if inclement weather. Third, Commissioner Thompson stated the Military Banners would be displayed until November. Last, Commissioner Thompson stated the mural unveilings were planned Saturday, May 16, 2026, at 10:00 am at Boyd's and 10:15 am at Mendoza Park. First, Commissioner Jackson stated that the CityVision conference was very exciting and fulfilling. She further stated that she appreciated the information provided by the Mayor regarding opportunities to receive recognition or awards through the School of Government programs and noted that the information was very helpful. Last, Commissioner

Jackson expressed interest in participating in the North Carolina League of Municipalities' "Commit to Civility" program. First, Commissioner Burgess stated that CityVision was enjoyable and provided valuable knowledge and networking opportunities. He noted that several important individuals were present and acknowledged Mr. English for his connections and involvement during the event. Second, Commissioner Burgess also announced that the mural dedication ceremony would be held on Saturday, May 16, 2026, at Boyd's, beginning at 10:00 am, with an additional event at Mendoza Park scheduled for 10:15 am. Last, Commissioner Burgess concluded by thanking Mr. English for his continued work and efforts in helping move the community forward. First, Commissioner Cooper noted she didn't attend CityVision for the first time in 8-9 years, having served on Boards for four (4) years. Second, Commissioner Cooper mentioned upcoming NCLM finance courses, including an audit webinar tomorrow, Tuesday, May 13, 2026, available to Elected Officials free of charge. Last, regarding the water outage response, Commissioner Cooper emphasized that residents calling for updates needed to have the Town app downloaded, stating she wouldn't provide information to those without the app due to its simplicity.

h. Manager's Report – Interim Town Manager Dennis English Jr. – Mr. English announced that Spring Lake had officially partnered with Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC) for a work-based learning program. The initiative created a pipeline for student interns in the water operations department, reinforcing workforce capacity while providing real-world technical education.

The standardized internship framework required 120 hours over three (3) weeks, with students establishing three (3) learning objectives monitored by direct supervisors. The first intern would start Wednesday, May 20, 2026.

Mr. English reported speaking with DOT about pothole repairs, noting 390 potholes had been repaired as of April along North Carolina Highway 87 South, with projections approaching 500. He offered to arrange a meeting with DOT officials if Board members felt these numbers were inaccurate.

Mr. English noted increasing traffic accidents due to excessive speeding on highways 210 and 87, announcing plans for focused speed enforcement operations with digital signs warning drivers to slow down when entering Spring Lake.

Mr. English described attending CityVision as a reunion opportunity and participating in Best Utility Management Practice training in Lillington with Commissioners Burgess and Commissioner Jackson. He noted Spring Lake's advanced knowledge of asset inventory assessments compared to other Towns, with many municipalities lacking awareness of basic acronyms and concepts.

The training emphasized that aging water infrastructure was a statewide problem, not unique to Spring Lake. The state encouraged Towns to participate in mergers and regional feasibility studies. Mr. English committed to keeping the Board fully informed about potential partnerships while noting Spring Lake was ahead of the curve on infrastructure planning.

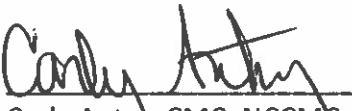
i. Town Attorney Report – Town Attorney Michael Porter – First, Attorney Porter reported on the resolution of a long-standing legal matter involving Justine Jones, whom the Board had voted to hire as Town Manager in Fall 2022. The Treasurer at the time had declined to approve the hiring, leading to

anticipated litigation. He stated an EEOC complaint was filed in January or February 2023, but Spring Lake was never named as a Defendant. After nearly 3 ½ years, the matter was recently settled with a \$320,000 payment, though Spring Lake didn't pay anything since they had followed proper procedures. Last, regarding Spring Lake Property Acquisition (SLPA) foreclosure proceedings, Attorney Porter reported that final pleadings were signed approximately a week and a half ago, though he hadn't received final confirmation from the Hutchens Law Firm. He expected additional updates as the slow litigation process continued.


**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**Action:** There being no further business to come before the Board, Mayor Anthony adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.

ATTEST:

  
Carly Autry, CMC, NCCMC  
Town Clerk



  
Kia Anthony  
Mayor