December 17, 2025

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a Recessed Meeting on Wednesday, December 17, 2025 at 9:00 AM in the Commissioners Room, 116 Adams St., Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Ann C. Keyes, Tracey A. Johnson, John C. Spruill and Julius Walker, Jr. were in attendance. Also, present were County Manager/ County Attorney Curtis S. Potter, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett and County Finance Officer Missy Dixon. Assistant County Manager, Jason Squires was unable to attend.

Chair Spruill called the meeting to order.

RESO 2025-033 AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF ROPER (WOW) ANNEX BUILDING: Mr. Curtis Potter, CM/CA spoke to the Board about the following Resolution. There is no monetary consideration and the building is to be used for education. It would come back before the board if they wanted to use it for another purpose. Also, the building cannot be sold.

RESOLUTION 2025-033

AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF COUNTY-OWNED REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 100 NC HWY 32 N, IN ROPER TO THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

WHEREAS, Washington County is the owner of certain real property acquired and more particularly described by deed recorded in Deed Book 463, Page 863 in the Washington County Register of Deeds Office, which is located at 100 NC Highway 32 North, Roper, North Carolina, and commonly referred to as the former Windows of the World or Roper Annex property (hereinafter "WOW/Annex"); and

WHEREAS, the Washington County Board of Education is a local governmental entity organized and existing under the laws of the State of North Carolina and is charged with the operation and administration of the public schools of Washington County; and

WHEREAS, said Board of Education recently vacated multiple school facilities that have been or are in the process of being transferred to Washington County pursuant to a Funding Agreement existing between both governments related to the recent construction of a new consolidated PK-12 School; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education also owns a parcel of property adjoining the WOW/Annex property and has requested that the County convey the WOW/Annex property to the Board of Education so that both adjoining parcels can be utilized together in the continuing provision of Early College or for other administrative support purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Washington County Board of Commissioners has determined that the conveyance of the above-described real property to the Board of Education for such use will serve a public purpose and is in the best interests of the citizens of Washington County; and

WHEREAS, upon the adoption of a resolution to do so by the governing board, NCGS § 160A-274(b), authorizes any governmental unit, upon such terms and conditions as it deems wise, with or without consideration, to exchange with, lease to, lease from, sell to, or purchase from any other governmental unit, any interest in real or personal property; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners desires to authorize the conveyance of said property to the Washington County Board of Education pursuant to the above-referenced statutory authority.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Washington County, North Carolina, as follows:

1. Authorization of Conveyance.
   The Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the conveyance of the County-owned WOW/Annex real property, together with all appurtenances and interests therein, to the Washington County Board of Education, pursuant to 160A-274, and without monetary consideration, and for the exclusive public purpose of using such property to provide public education.

2. Form of Conveyance.
   The conveyance shall be made by quitclaim deed and shall include a provision determined appropriate by the County Attorney restricting the future use of the property to its intended public purpose of providing public education in perpetuity to protect the County's interest therein.

3. Execution of Documents.
   The Chair of the Board of Commissioners, the County Manager, the County Attorney, and the Clerk to the Board are hereby authorized and directed to execute and attest any and all deeds, certificates, and other documents necessary to effectuate this conveyance.

4. Effective Date.
   This resolution shall be effective upon its adoption.

ADOPTED this 17th day of December, 2025.

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John C. Spruill, Chair
Washington County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: _____
Julie J. Bennett, MMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve RESO 2025-033 Authorizing Transfer of Roper (WOW) Annex Building. Commissioner Walker seconded; motion passed unanimously.

TAX OFFICE UPDATES: Mr. Curtis Potter spoke to the Board. The draft Service Enhancement Plan that you received regarding the Tax Office will be finalized by the end of this week. Appraisers have begun their work for the revaluation. Keystone will be moving Washington County in front of Perquimans County and half of the software will be available in March, which is to be used by the appraisers for the reval and the rest of the software will be available in May. Ms. Dixon did provide information to the Board on what has been paid to Keystone so far. She has a more detailed spreadsheet if the Board would like it. Discussion ensued regarding modules.

90-Day Service Enhancement Plan – Tax Office

Washington County Mission Statement: ***Washington County will improve, promote & protect the health & welfare of our citizens. To provide exceptional public services in a fiscally responsible manner, to meet the diverse needs of our residents, visitors & business community.***

Purpose: In keeping with the County's mission to provide exceptional public services, the purpose of this plan is to outline short-term priorities and actions to support effective operations and consistent service delivery over the next 90 days.

This plan is intended to address workflow inefficiencies and missed deadlines resulting from staffing capacity and continuity challenges, reduce an existing backlog of tax-customer service requests, monitor and meet critical upcoming deadlines, and ensure adequate preparation for the successful long-term implementation of the Keystone Tax Software and the Early Revaluation projects.

Structure: This plan is essentially a 30/60/90 which is a short-term planning tool that breaks work into three phases over a 90-day period. The first 30 days focus on stabilizing operations and addressing immediate needs. The next 60 days focus on improving workflows, resolving backlogs, and tracking key deadlines. The final 90 days focus on preparing for longer-term goals and upcoming projects. This approach helps prioritize work, clarify expectations, and ensure steady progress while maintaining day-to-day service.

Shared Internal Goals: Our shared internal goals for the next 90 days are as follows:

1. Stabilize daily operations and meet our deadlines.
2. Communicate better—inside the office and with the public.
3. Improve workflows so that no single absence disrupts the department.
4. Support each other with clear roles, cross-training, and teamwork.
5. Build sustainable processes that protect the department long-term & better support the County's Mission Statement.

Anticipated General Timeline:

Target Date	Target Milestone	
12/5/25	Conduct Outside Eval By NCACC Tax Advisory Team	
12/8/25	Preliminary Admin/Tax Discussions	
12/15/25	Initial Draft Complete	
12/18/25	Final Draft Complete	
12/22/25	Begin Phase 1	
1/14/26	Eval Phase 1 & Make Adjustments	
1/20/26	Start Phase 2	
2/13/26	Eval Phase 3 & Make Adjustments	
2/17/26	Start Phase 3	
3/20/26	Eval Phase 3 & Assess Next Steps	

Phase I — First 30 Days: Stabilize & Reset

1. Leadership & Communication Structure (Week 1–2)
   - Appoint and utilize a temporary acting Deputy Tax Admin (DTA) as daily operations lead. Define clear chain of command for decisions when TA and/or DTA are absent.
   - Est. on-line collaboration tool to encourage Q&A and open discussion between staff, supervisors, and managers.
   - Est. daily 10-minute morning huddle for staff to confirm priorities and assignments.
     - Use a set agenda and stick to time.
   - Push weekly status email/update to County Management summarizing workload, progress, & risks. 3PM Fridays.
   - Meet early each week with County Management to review prior week progress, discuss obstacles and possible resolution strategies, and to review and discuss next steps.
   - Provide a written monthly progress report to County Management.
   - Hold a staff meeting after each 30/60/90 Phase to get feedback/input on both completed and upcoming phases.

2. Consultant Assessment (Week 1)
   - Conduct the scheduled 1-day assessment. Gather short-term and long-term recommendations in writing within 5 business days. Use consultant feedback to confirm or refine the remaining steps of the 30/60/90 plan.

3. Deadline & Workload Triage (Week 1–3)
   - Halt all nonessential projects temporarily.
   - Identify all critical deadlines for the next 90 days (revaluation tasks, billing cycles, foreclosure timelines, listing/AV deadlines, appeals, etc.).
   - Create a visual deadline tracker posted centrally in the office.
   - Assign a "primary" and "backup" employee for each major task. Backups to observe and cross train with primary whenever opportunities arise.

4. Customer Service Rapid Fixes (Week 1–3)
   - Create a temporary public relations/communications plan:
     - Calls returned within 2 business days
     - Email inquiries answered 2 business days
     - Develop and implement collaborative tracking procedures
   - Place signage & website notice explaining temporary disruptions, operational leadership changes, and response time goals/procedures during service improvement process.

5. Rebuild Internal Organization (Week 2–4)
   - Review roles and workloads for each staff member.
   - Redistribute tasks to avoid single-points of failure.
   - Ensure all staff have access to needed software, passwords, templates, and procedures.

30-Day Deliverables

- Stable daily operations under primary supervision of DTA
- Updated and prioritized deadline and backlog lists
- Consultant's assessment summary
- Collaborative trackable customer service response system operational
- Weekly reporting to County Management underway

Phase II — Next 60 Days: Improve Efficiency & Restore Momentum

1. Complete All Imminent Deadlines
   - Create a weekly deadline check-in led by DTA.
   - Use consultants' recommendations to adjust workflows.
   - Implement "early warning" flags for deadlines at risk (yellow = 14 days, red = 7 days).

2. Process Clean-Up & Efficiency Gains

   Focus on 3–4 high-impact workflows, such as:
   - Payment posting & reconciliation
   - Motor vehicle billing reconciliation
   - Real property listing & data entry
   - Enforcement/collections queue

   For each workflow:
   - Map the current process
   - Identify bottlenecks
   - Standardize step-by-step procedures
   - Document saved time and errors reduced

3. Training Program
   - Identify any current critical individual or group training needs and create a corrective action plan
   - Create a regular staff training maintenance plan to maintain adequate training within the department.
   - Implement a rotating cross-training schedule so that at least two employees can handle each major function.
   - Use a simple 3-level matrix (Observer → Assisted Performer → Independent Performer).

4. Communication & Customer Service Improvements
   - Add a "Service Board" at the front counter with:
     - Current processing times
     - Key deadlines for the public
     - Contact information
   - Create short, clear customer service scripts for common questions. Post these online as well.

5. Strengthen Accountability & Tracking
   - Begin using a shared task tracker (Teams, Excel, SharePoint, etc.).
   - Hold biweekly 30-minute team check-ins focused purely on workflow and deadlines.

60-Day Deliverables
• All major deadlines met or on track • Documented, improved workflows in priority areas • Training needs assessed and implementation plan established • Improved customer-service experience and communication • Reduced backlog and stabilized response times and queue volumes

Phase III — Final 90 Days: Build Sustainable Operations

1. Technology & Data Improvements
   - Review consultant recommendations for software configuration changes.
   - Standardize file naming, shared drive structure, and backup practices.
   - Implement simple dashboard metrics (weekly or monthly):
     - Call response times
     - Number of open customer inquiries
     - Delinquent accounts trending
     - Processing backlog
     - Key statutory milestone progress

2. Workforce Planning & Leadership Stability
   - Evaluate staffing needs based on: -Absence patterns -Workload distribution -Upcoming peak periods, etc
   - Determine whether the DTA role should continue temporarily, evolve permanently, or shift as conditions change.
   - Develop a consolidated Tax Department operating manual to be updated bi-annually:
     - Billing cycles; Collections enforcement; Foreclosure/advertising timelines; Appeals/listing processes; Customer service protocols; etc.

3. Begin Culture & Service Reset
   - Reinforce expectations around communication, deadlines, and professionalism.
   - Begin quarterly customer-service feedback surveys (very short).
   - Implement recognition moments for team improvements and milestones met.

4. Longer-Term Planning & Assessment
   - Evaluate need/impact of restarting any non-essential operations halted at the beginning of Phase I.
   - Evaluate overall plan progress and success; consider impacts on service delivery operations from any known upcoming changes to deadlines, staffing, technology, legislative regulations, etc.
   - Develop a long-term planning strategy and a written plan including a set schedule for key individual projects and regularly recurring tasks which may include:
     - Amending or extending this plan beyond 90 days.
     - Early Tax Revaluation Project Impacts.
     - Creation of a standing customer feedback loop for close to real time monitoring of issues.
     - Creation of a key metrics dashboard for more transparent monitoring and reporting.
     - Individual Staff Performance Evaluations & Continuity of Operations/Succession Planning
     - Site visiting other Tax Departments to observe their best practices for possible integration.

5. Prepare a Comprehensive 3-Month Progress Report for Management and the Board
   - Overview of accomplishments
   - Remaining risks or gaps
   - Next 90 day steps
   - Any recommendations for long-term planning & stability (personnel, software, training, or process changes)

90-Day Deliverables
• Fully documented and sustainable procedures • Cleaned-up workflow systems • Leadership and staffing stability plan • Written 3-month report ready for Board review

RESO 2025-034 APPOINTING REVIEW OFFICERS: Mr. Curtis Potter stated that this is a standard Resolution that has to be updated as staff leave. In this update, new staff names are listed as Review Officers as well as additional ones from the Mid-East Commission who will be assisting the County in Planning.

RESOLUTION 2025-034

APPOINTING REVIEW OFFICERS

WHEREAS, S.L. 1997-309 (Senate Bill 875) makes a number of significant changes in the procedures for recording maps and plats; and

WHEREAS, the new G.S. 47-30.2 required the Board of Commissioners in each County, by resolution, to appoint one or more persons experienced in mapping or land records management as Review Officer to review each plat before it is recorded and certify that it meets the statutory requirements for recording; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Washington County Board of Commissioners to ensure an expeditious review of all maps and plats as required by G.S. 47-30.2 before they are presented to the Register of Deeds for Recording.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Connie Barnes, Sherri Wilkins, Hollie Respess, Seth Laughlin (Mid-East Commission), Joshua Hollis (Mid-East Commission), and Bryant Buck (Mid-East Commission) are hereby appointed to perform all the responsibilities as required for a Review Officer.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following previous appointees are no longer designated as Review Officers, including but not limited to: Richard Livingston, Tim Esolen, Stephanie Hendrix, Debbie Askew, Lionel West, Brad Parker, Phyllis Ange, Ann Keyes, and Harry White.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution designating the Review Officers to be recorded in the Washington County Register of Deeds Office and indexed in the names of the Review Officers pursuant to new G.S. 47-30.2, and that this Resolution shall become effective December 17, 2025 as specified in S.L. 1997-309.

ADOPTED this 17th day of December, 2025.

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John C. Spruill, Chair
Washington County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Julie J. Bennett, MMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board

Commissioner Keyes made a motion to approve RESO 2025-034 Appointing Review Officers. Commissioner Phelps seconded; motion carried unanimously.

BUDGET TRANSFERS/AMENDMENTS: Ms. Missy Dixon, Finance Officer asked the Board if they had any questions about the budget amendments that were in their Agenda Pkg. Commissioner Johnson had a question about #043 and Ms. Dixon said she

would have to talk with Ms. Lynn Swett in DSS and get back to her. Mr. Potter said the issue in question probably depended on the court order. On another note, Ms. Dixon also mentioned that it looks like our ambulance that was involved in an accident is going to be totaled by the insurance company.

Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve BA/BT#2026 – 042 to #2026-044. Commissioner Keyes seconded; motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSIONER SEATS ON BOARDS & COMMITTEES: Ms. Julie J. Bennett, Clerk to the Board spoke to the Board. This is the time of year to indicate whether each Commissioner would like to remain on their current committee or board, or if they wish to request a change (if permitted). Please review the information below from 2025. If you would like to make any changes, please let Ms. Bennett know and she will note them and bring the updated list to the January 5, 2026 BoCC meeting for approval.

Washington County Boards & Committees
Commissioners Seats
January 6, 2025

Name	Board or Committee	Expiration Date or Comment
Carol V. Phelps	Lake Phelps Advisory Board	Board Vote
	Washington County Drainage	Board Consent
	Albemarle Commission RPO	Board Vote
	Travel & Tourism Authority	Board Cosent
	Employee of the Quarter Committee	rotates w/the Chair
Tracey A. Johnson	Albemarle Commission--Workforce Development Program Consortium Board	Board Vote
	Albemarle Commission--Executive Committee--COG	Board Vote
	Trillium Health Board	Board Vote
	Broadband Task Force Committee	Board Consent
	Washington County Airport Advisory Board	Board Consent
Julius Walker, Jr.	Department of Social Services Board	Board Vote
	JCPC Board	Board Vote
	SmartStart Partnership for Children	Board Vote
	ARSWA	Board Vote
	BCCC Board of Trustees	Board Vote 4 yr term 2024-2028
	PreK-12 Building/Steering Committee	Board Consent
	Ecomomic Development Advisory Council	Board Consent
Ann C. Keyes	Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee	Board Consent
	Fire Commission	Board Consent
	MTW Health Department Board	Board Consent
	Albemarle Commission--Washington County Alternate	Board Vote
	Local Emergency Planning Committee	Board Consent
	Planning Board	Board Consent
	PreK-12 Building/Steering Committee	Board Consent
	Safety Committee	Board Consent
	Resource Conservation & Development	Board Vote
John C. Spruill	Washington County Drainage	Board Consent
	Lake Phelps Advisory Board	Board Vote
	Albemarle Commission RPO--Alternate	Board Vote
	Washington County Facilities Advisory Committee	Board Consent
	Washington County Airport Advisory Committee	Board Consent

OTHER ITEMS:

a) Approval of Minutes from December 1, 2025 Meeting

Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from December 1, 2025. Commissioner Keyes seconded; motion carried unanimously.

b) Approval of Audit Contract Amendment—Ms. Dixon will cc the Board after submittal to the LGC.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve the Audit Contract Amendment. Commissioner Walker seconded; motion carried unanimously.

c) RESO 2025-035 Verizon Consent for Access to Property Form

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the Verizon Consent for Access to Property Form. Commissioner Keyes seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Keyes seconded; motion carried unanimously.

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Julie J. Bennett, NCMCC, MMC
Clerk to the Board

John C. Spruill
Chair