

GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
June 2, 2025
GRANVILLE EXPO AND CONVENTION CENTER
4185 US Highway 15 South, Oxford, North Carolina

PRESENT:

Chair Jimmy Gooch
Vice-Chair Zelodis Jay
Commissioner Robert Williford
Commissioner Mark Griffin
Commissioner Tony W. Cozart
Commissioner Russ May
Commissioner Timothy Karan

County Manager Drew Cummings
Deputy County Manager Korena Weichel
County Attorney James C. Wrenn, Jr.

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:10 p.m., Chair Jimmy Gooch called the meeting to order. Commissioner Russ May had the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Gooch introduced the 2025 Leadership Granville cohort and thanked them for attending the meeting. He provided background on the Leadership Granville program, noting it is a community engagement initiative designed to deepen participants’ understanding of Granville County’s structure, history, and key issues, while fostering personal and professional growth. The 2024 cohort included representatives from various local organizations, including Area Congregation in Ministry (ACIM), Butner Public Safety, Duke Energy, Granville County departments, Fidelity Bank, the Masonic Home for Children of Oxford, Northern Point Realty, the City of Oxford, Oxford Preparatory School, and Vance-Granville Community College.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Mark Griffin, and unanimously carried, Board approved the June 2, 2025 regular meeting agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner May requested the Approval of Minutes to be at the recommendation of the Clerk to the Board, which Clerk Evans confirmed.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, Board approved the consent agenda as follows:

- **Approved assignment of fund balance for GCPS special projects.**

- **Approved the following tax refunds, releases, and write-offs:**

Refunds	May 5, 2025 – May 20, 2025	\$ 4,113.15
Releases	May 5, 2025 – May 20, 2025	\$ 904.46
Write-offs	May 5, 2025 – May 20, 2025	\$ 1.83

INTRODUCTIONS, RECOGNITIONS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Introduction of Summer Civic Youth Leadership Program

Cooperative Extension Agent Lina Howe, 4-H Youth Development, introduced the 2025 Summer Civic Leadership Internship Program. This initiative offers rising 10th through 12th graders a dynamic 120-hour internship experience that includes rotating through various County departments. Selected from a pool of over 50 applicants, six interns will participate in this year's program.

Since 2000, the Granville County Board of Commissioners has annually funded scholarships for local students through the Summer Civic Leadership Program, now in its twenty-third iteration, with exceptions in 2020, 2021, and 2022. The 2025 program began with orientation sessions held from Tuesday, May 27 through Thursday, May 29, 2025.

This year's interns—two rising 10th graders, two rising 11th graders, and two rising 12th graders—will rotate through various County departments throughout June and July, gaining hands-on experience in local government operations. In addition to their placements, they will participate in weekly cohort days to collaborate on a team project and engage with departments outside their primary assignments to explore the broader functions of Granville County government.

- The following interns were introduced:
 - Jonathan Eley, rising sophomore at South Granville High School, expressed interest in gaining civics knowledge and understanding government operations.
 - Logan Quintas, rising sophomore at Granville Early College, shared his goal of learning new skills and gaining real-world experience.
 - Enaan Khan, rising junior at Falls Lake Academy, said he was most interested in understanding how County departments collaborate.
 - Victoria Monroe, rising senior at Falls Lake Academy, looked forward to learning how each department functions.
 - Ke'Von Umstead, rising senior at J. F. Webb High School, was especially interested in learning how the Sheriff's Office operates.
 - Atlas Travis, a rising junior at Granville Early College High School, was selected as an intern but was unable to attend the meeting.

Chair Gooch thanked the interns and expressed appreciation on behalf of the Board.

The interns are scheduled to present at the August 4, 2025 Board of Commissioners regular meeting.

Update from the JCPC

Eddie Crews, a Granville County native and Central Area Consultant for the Department of Juvenile Justice, delivered a presentation on behalf of the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council advisory board. Among the attendees were JCPC members who play pivotal roles in youth services: Reverend Omokunde, Chair of the JCPC; Tina Cheek, Vice Chair representing Oxford Parks and Recreation; and Charissa Puryear, CEO of the Granville County Boys & Girls Club.

- **Overview of Funded Programs**
 - *Youth Villages (YV):*
 - Community Connections offers intensive, wraparound family counseling for high-risk youth.
 - YV Lead Assessment provides free clinical assessments, often used by schools.
 - *Community Service & Restitution:*

- Transitioned from 4-H to Boys & Girls Club this year.
 - Serves as a common juvenile court disposition, including restitution and family engagement.
- *Positive Action Program:*
 - Evidence-based early intervention program run by the Boys & Girls Club.
 - Targets ages 6–17 with lessons on avoiding drugs, gangs, and other risky behavior.
- *Teen Court:*
 - Diversion program for low-level, first-time offenses.
 - Youth act as court officials under adult supervision; also introduces teens to legal careers.
- *Trails to Success:*
 - Equine-assisted therapy and skill-building program at Shepherd Youth Ranch.
 - Serves youth with mental health needs in southern Granville County.
- **Program Performance and Adjustments (FY 2024–25)**
 - Community Connections met and slightly exceeded projections.
 - YV Lead Assessment underperformed due to lower-than-expected referrals.
 - Teen Court and Restitution fell short due to transition delays after 4-H exited the program.
 - Positive Action slightly overserved its target.
 - Trails to Success significantly exceeded projections.
 - Flexibility in JCPC funding allowed mid-year redistribution of funds from underperforming to over-capacity programs.
- **Use of Administrative Funds**
 - Supported School Resource Officer (SRO) training.
 - Funded Parks and Recreation scholarships for at-risk youth.
- **Referrals and SRO Involvement**
 - Estimated referral sources:
 - Schools: ~60%
 - SROs: ~30–40%
 - Juvenile Court Counselors: ~25–30%
 - Anticipated increase in Teen Court referrals now that the program has regained stability.
- **Acknowledgements**
 - Chair of JCPC, Reverend Omokunde, recognized several JCPC members and praised Eddie Crews' leadership, and highlighted Granville County's consistent success with Teen Court (top in state for 3 years; 16-year participant).
- **Meeting Information**
 - JCPC meets the second Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at the Granville County Convention and Expo Center.
 - Meetings are open to the public; there is no meeting in July.

Board Approved JCPC County Funding Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, Board approved the Granville County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council funding plan for fiscal year 2025-2026.

Program	JCPC Funds	County Cash Match
Boys and Girls Club Positive Action Skill Building Program	\$25,570	\$3,836
Youth Villages Community Connections and YV LEAD Assessment	\$58,582	\$8,787
Shepard Youth Ranch – Trails to Success	\$31,637	\$4,746
Boys and Girls Club Restorative Pathways (Teen Court and Community Service)	\$61,238	\$9,186
JCPC Administrative	\$3810	\$571
Totals	\$180,837	\$27,126

Board Approved JCPC Membership List for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, Board approved the Granville County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council membership list for fiscal year 2025-2026.

Name	Title	Specified Member
Troy Wheless	Creedmoor Chief of Police	Chief of Police or Designee
Arneisha Crossen	System of Care Coordinator	Local Managed Care Coordinator
Amy Rice	Director of Student & Support Services	School Superintendent or Designee
Benji Laws	School Resource Officer	Local Sheriff or Designee
Marie Chapman	Chief Court Counselor	Chief Court Counselor or Designee
Vacant		DSS Director or Designee
Alvin Downing	Pastor	Member of Faith Community
Rob Williford	County Commissioner	County Commissioner
Samantha Branch	Guardian Ad Litem	Rep. of Families of At-Risk Youth
Dietrich McMillan	Legal Aid Attorney	Juvenile Defense Attorney
Katherine Burnette	District Court Judge	Chief District Judge or Designee
Tina Cheek	Oxford Parks & Recreation	Rep. Parks and Recreation
Cathy Hazlett	Substance Abuse Professional	Substance Abuse Professional
Amy Langsten	Families Living Violence Free	Rep. of Local Non-Profit
Terry Jones	Social Worker	Local Health Director or Designee
Vacant		Person Under Age 21
Vacant		District Attorney or Designee
Leroy Anderson	County Commissioner Appointee	District 1
Alex Fonvielle	County Commissioner Appointee	District 2
Elliott Carver	County Commissioner Appointee	District 3
Tolokun Omokunde (Chair)	County Commissioner Appointee	District 4/Member of Business Community
Jessica Laws	County Commissioner Appointee	District 5
Eduardo Sosa	County Commissioner Appointee	District 6
Hope Pittman	County Commissioner Appointee	District 7
Eddie Crews	NC Dept. of Public Safety Juvenile Justice	Staff
Drew Cummings	Granville County Manager	Staff
Melissa Averett	JPCP Administrative Coordinator	Staff

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sandra Berry, 5139A Gooch’s Mill Road, Oxford, NC, expressed concern about zoning violations in her neighborhood. She stated that the area is zoned for residential and agricultural use (AR-40), but commercial activity—specifically a high-traffic auction business—appears to be operating there. Berry cited increased traffic, disruptions to nearby properties, and safety concerns, and requested that the County take action to halt further auctions and enforce appropriate zoning regulations.

BUDGET MATTERS

Board Adopted Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Ordinance, Fee Manual, and Classification & Pay Plan

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Russ May, and unanimously carried, Board approved adoption of the fiscal year 2025-2026 Budget Ordinance, Fee Manual, and Classification & Pay Plan.

Board Approved Special Budget Amendment (Smart Start) for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Commissioner Tony W. Cozart recused himself as Executive Director of Smart Start.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Russ May, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board approved the Special Budget Amendment to amend fiscal year 2025-2026 Budget Ordinance.

PURCHASING

Board Approved Landfill Soil Borrow Area Development Project

Environmental Programs Director Jason Falls explained that the purpose of the request was to seek approval for a task order related to the Oxford Landfill's future development. The project involves ongoing studies and permitting in preparation for the construction of the next waste cell, which is scheduled for fiscal year 2027–2028. The task order includes work necessary to identify and permit a new soil borrow area, which is essential for landfill expansion.

Tasks covered in the proposal include:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional determination and permitting (Nationwide Permit)
- Wetland impact delineation
- Erosion and sedimentation control permitting
- Bid-phase construction documents and services

This phase of work does not include clearing activities like logging and stumping. All work falls under the existing contract with Garrett & Moore, the County's contracted engineering firm for landfill compliance, permitting, groundwater monitoring, and related services. County Attorney Jim Wrenn reviewed and provided an amendment to the existing contract to include this task order.

Motioned by Commissioner Mark Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, Board approved Task Order #13 from Garrett and Moore in the amount of \$65,700.00 for permitting, compliance, and bid preparation work related to the development of the next soil borrow area for the Oxford Landfill. Funding will be from the fiscal year 2024-2025 landfill continuation budget line item 60-4725-599. The Board acknowledged that subsequent phases, including logging, stumping, and construction of the borrow area, are planned for fiscal year 2025-2026.

GRANT MATTERS

Board Approved Home and Community Care Block Grant Funding

Director of Senior Services Kathy May presented the proposed funding plan for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCB) for fiscal year 2025–2026. Director May explained that the grant, authorized in 1992 through North Carolina General Statutes, is the department's largest annual outside funding source. The grant is composed of approximately 45% federal funds

(authorized by the Older Americans Act of 1965), 45% state funds, and a required 10% local match, which has already been budgeted.

Granville County Senior Services is the lead agency responsible for planning and coordinating this funding. The plan before the Board was developed based on current-year expenditures and service demand. It was reviewed and unanimously approved by the Senior Services Advisory Committee at its May 19, 2025, meeting.

Due to the lack of confirmed allocations for the upcoming fiscal year, the plan proceeds based on the current year's funding level of \$528,504. Director May noted that the funding is flexible, allowing for adjustments between services during the year based on need.

She emphasized that these community-based services help delay institutionalization, ease caregiver burden, and reduce the risk of elder abuse. Without these services, more older adults would require costly nursing home placements.

Board Discussion Highlights:

- Commissioner May inquired about the status of the grant and was assured that although the exact amount is pending, Granville County receives this funding annually and that amounts have been historically stable.
- County Manager and Director May both noted that in the event of a reduction, funding adjustments would be made across services to address priority needs.
- Commissioners Cozart and Griffin expressed support and appreciation for the work of Director May and her staff in serving the County's senior population.

Motioned by Commissioner Mark Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, Board approved the Home and Community Care Block Grant County Funding Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 based on the current year's funding appropriation of \$528,505 with the acknowledgement that final funding levels for FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 have not yet been released.

PLANNING MATTERS

Board Approved County Legal Position on Unlawful Rezoning by the City of Oxford

Board discussed County's ongoing efforts to address zoning jurisdiction concerns with the City of Oxford. Chair Gooch stated that the issue centered around the City's attempt to rezone properties located within areas still under County jurisdiction. He noted that the County's legal counsel had made multiple attempts in recent weeks to engage the City of Oxford regarding this matter, emphasizing that land use actions must comply with applicable laws. Despite repeated communications and the provision of documentation, no formal response had been received from the City. Chair Gooch initiated a discussion with the Board, the County Attorney, and the County Manager regarding whether any form of communication or outreach had been received from the City.

Chair Gooch questioned board members and officials on whether they had received any communication:

- County Attorney Wrenn: No communication responsive to the County's letters.
- County Manager Cummings: No formal response.
- Commissioners Jay, Williford, Griffin, Karan, and May: No communication received.
- Commissioner Cozart: Had informal conversations with a majority of Oxford's board expressing interest in resolving the matter, but nothing formalized.
- Commissioner Williford (added later): Had also held informal talks with Oxford commissioners who wanted to resolve the issue pre-litigation.

- Chair Gooch noted that while two commissioners had been informally contacted, no outreach was made to the rest of the board, legal counsel, or County Administration.

Chair's Recommendation:

- Based on the lack of formal engagement, Chair Gooch recommended proceeding with legal action, as directed previously by the Board, if no resolution is reached.
- He cited multiple documented efforts to communicate, including:
 - A letter sent via email on May 5, 2025, signed by all Commissioners.
 - A letter from legal counsel to the City on May 6, 2025.
 - A public records request from the County to the City on April 23, 2025.

Discussion on Legal Standing and New Information:

- Commissioner Jay asked if both letters had been received; Attorney Wrenn confirmed receipt and shared additional updates:
 - An agenda item had appeared on the City of Oxford's upcoming meeting agenda regarding the annexation of the Hunt Farm and Perry Farm properties.
 - Attorney Wrenn explained:
 - Annexation must occur before zoning jurisdiction is transferred.
 - Under G.S. §160D-204, a city cannot make final decisions on zoning until it has jurisdiction.
 - The City had taken zoning actions before annexation in both instances:
 - Hunt Farm: Annexation process was started and then halted before rezoning.
 - Perry Farm: Rezoning occurred with no annexation petition on file.
- Attorney Wrenn emphasized that repeated attempts were made to clarify legal concerns with City officials, but no substantive response was received.

Statutory Context and Legal Risk:

- Attorney Wrenn noted that even if annexation occurs, there remains:
 - Lack of clarity during the interim period.
 - No assurance that the City will complete the annexation process.
- G.S. §160D-202 states that city development regulations apply only after annexation is finalized and 60 days have passed or upon immediate adoption of new zoning districts.
- Attorney Wrenn clarified that the County is not attempting to block the City's annexation rights, only to ensure that proper procedure is followed and prior rezoning is acknowledged as invalid.

Board Discussion Highlights:

- Commissioner Cozart advocated allowing the City until its next meeting to correct course. In response, Chair Gooch cited:
 - The risk of precedent if other municipalities follow suit.
 - Oxford's delay in responding formally.
 - The County's extensive efforts to communicate clearly and legally.
- Commissioner May questioned whether anything in the City's upcoming agenda suggested a change in legal posture, expressing skepticism.
- Attorney Wrenn confirmed the posted agenda only indicated early annexation steps, not a full resolution or acknowledgment of legal missteps.
- Commissioner Griffin recommended giving the City until Tuesday, June 10, 2025, to adopt a written agreement before filing suit on Wednesday, June 11, 2025.
- Commissioner Karan noted frustration with the lack of response from the City and referenced past lawsuits filed by the City against the County, emphasizing prior costly litigation.

Legal Path Forward:

- Attorney Wrenn summarized for clarification:
 - If the City executes a written agreement by June 10, 2025, acknowledging that the rezoning actions were improper and agreeing to follow the correct annexation and rezoning procedures, no legal action will be taken.
 - The County's complaint is already drafted and can be filed June 11, 2025, if no such resolution occurs.
- Commissioner May asked for confirmation that this approach would still preserve the County's legal standing. Attorney Wrenn affirmed.
- Chair Gooch reiterated that all the County had asked for was proper process and communication, which it had not received.

Board Comments:

Additional board comments occurred after the motion carried:

- Commissioner May clarified that the purpose of the waiting period was to allow the City time to adopt the agreement at their upcoming meeting.
- Commissioner Karan stated that if the situation were reversed, the County would be expected to respond to a municipality's board-wide letter and emphasized the May 5th letter had not received that courtesy.
- Chair Gooch concluded the discussion, expressing hope that Oxford would respond and the matter could be resolved without litigation.

Motioned by Commissioner Jay, seconded by Commissioner Cozart, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the following action: if a written agreement is not received from the City of Oxford by June 10, 2025, the County will initiate legal action on June 11, 2025.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager Cummings expressed appreciation following the adoption of the County's budget for the upcoming fiscal year, offering special thanks to Deputy County Manager Korena Weichel and Finance Director Jennifer Baird, emphasizing that without their herculean efforts, the budget could not have come together as it did, and expressing his deep gratitude to both of them. He also acknowledged the contributions of department heads and Board members, while underscoring that the work of Weichel and Baird was especially critical.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

County Attorney Wrenn said that he had matters for closed session.

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS**Commissioner Jay**

- Attended a meeting where teachers discussed food insecurity among students; some students do not receive meals outside of school hours.
- Urged support for state legislation to provide meals for every student in the state and county.
- Reported on the launch of the KARTS Flex Ride pilot program in Vance County; users can schedule and pay for rides via an app, similar to Uber.
- Noted that the Flex Ride pilot is one of 11 transportation projects statewide and that Vance County was the fifth to launch.

Commissioner Williford

- Recognized the passing of Joe Bryan, a community icon, businessman, and founding member of the Granville County Economic Development Board.
- Expressed gratitude to veterans in honor of Memorial Day.
- Celebrated his daughter, Lindsey, who was named one of four Employees of the Year out of over 6,800 staff in Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation.
- Mentioned that Mecklenburg’s incoming county manager, Mike Bryant, began his career in Granville County.

Commissioner Griffin

- Attended four high school graduations in the county.
- Expressed appreciation for students, teachers, and administrators and acknowledged the transition to consolidated schools.
- Reported on a Vaya Health regional board meeting; noted a new 25,000-square-foot diversion center in Henderson, NC, with inpatient and walk-in services.
- Shared that Vaya Health also acquired a mobile opioid treatment van that will serve Granville County.

Commissioner Cozart

- Thanked fellow commissioners for productive discussion during the meeting.
- Attended graduations and expressed enjoyment in celebrating student accomplishments.
- Recognized a summer youth camp hosted by local churches at the Orange Street Community Center.
- Expressed concern over the possible closure of the Kitrell Job Corps, emphasizing its importance for skill development among youth.

Commissioner May

- Acknowledged his wife, Sheila, for her support over 48 years, explaining that a pre-planned trip kept him from attending graduations.
- Recognized the Summer Civic Youth Leadership Internship Program and Leadership Granville as valuable initiatives for developing future leaders.
- Praised County staff and the Board for approving a budget with no tax increase.
- Highlighted the addition of two School Resource Officers (SRO) positions, ensuring an officer at every school, and affirmed the Board’s commitment to school safety.

Commissioner Karan

- Attended graduation at Falls Lake Academy and celebrated the accomplishments of its 80 graduates.
- Announced the upcoming opening of the Picture Branch Nature Preserve trails in the Mangum Farms subdivision; this will bring the total to about eight miles of off-street trails in Stem, and encouraged attendance at the ribbon-cutting event scheduled for June 13 at 10:00 a.m.

Chair Gooch

- Thanked Commissioners Cozart and Griffin for attending graduations in his absence.
- Expressed appreciation for the respectful and passionate deliberation among Board members, and for their thoughtful comments and ongoing commitment to serving the community.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were no other matters for open session.

CLOSED SESSION

Motioned by Commissioner Mark Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board entered into closed session at 8:43 p.m. for attorney-client matters as allowed by G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) and personnel as allowed by G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6).

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Mark Griffin, and unanimously carried, Board returned to open session at 11:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Mark Griffin, and unanimously carried, Board adjourned at 11:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board