During its meetings on Nov. 2, the Johnston County Board of Commissioners:

- Held a public hearing on the latest draft of the County's proposed Unified Development Ordinance. The hearing drew several speakers, who largely called on the UDO to better protect farms from encroaching development. That has been a theme of the UDO process, which has included community drop-in sessions and a public hearing before the Planning Board. After Monday's public hearing, Commissioners said they had more work to do to get the UDO right, and they said the document would not be ready for adoption on Nov. 16.
- Agreed to help the Triangle Land Conservancy secure conservation easements on two farms — the 68-acre Cole Creek Farm near Benson and the 55.2-acre Tredway Farm, which straddles the Johnston-Wake border. At Cole Creek, Commissioners agreed to write a letter of support pledging $310,000 toward the purchase of the easement. That support should help the TLC secure grant funding to complete the purchase. For Tredway Farm, Commissioners agreed to commit $15,000 toward the easement purchase. With conservation easements, Cole Creek and Tredway will remain in farming in perpetuity.
- Heard an update from the Johnston County Visitors Bureau. Aaron Mullins is president of the Johnston County Tourism Authority, which oversees the Visitors Bureau. He told Commissioners that the Bureau, in partnership with Johnston County Cooperative Extension, will launch bus tours of local farms and agribusinesses starting in May 2027. Separately, the Visitors Bureau has already launched Driving JoCo, a video series that takes viewers to Johnston County destinations. Working with a public relations agency, the Visitors Bureau has also been able to land stories in several national magazines, including Forbes, Southern Living and Parade. In 2025, the economic impact of tourism on Johnston County reached a record $337.3 million.
- Adopted proclamations in observance of Veterans Day on Nov. 11 and Farm-City Week, Nov. 20-26. "Americans owe a great debt to all those who served in defense of this nation throughout the generations," the Veterans Day proclamation notes. The second proclamation notes that "Farm-City

collaborations help maintain and improve our nation's food and fiber supply and contribute to a better quality of life for countless citizens."

- Approved changes to the rules governing the public comment portion of Commissioner meetings. Among other things, the board will no longer restrict public comment to items not on the agenda. But it will limit comment to no more than 30 minutes and hold each speaker to three minutes. The changes also encourage groups supporting or opposing the same positions to choose a spokesperson. The new rules become effective at the Board's Nov. 16 meeting.
- Tabled a request to rezone 7.97 acres at 11358 and 11600 Cleveland Road. The owner is seeking a business zoning that would allow outdoor storage of trucks and trailers. While the Planning Board supported the request, Commissioners had several reservations. In particular, they wondered about traffic backing up on Cleveland Road if too many trucks were trying to enter the site at once. The board called on the owner to work with Planning Department staff to address those concerns.
- Called for a public hearing on a proposal for the County to pay some of the cost of extending a Town of Benson water line serving Vulcan Elements, a maker of rare-earth magnets, and future industrial users in the Crosspoint development. The County has money in its budget to pay for the larger water line; it would not need to dip into reserves. The hearing is scheduled for 6 p.m. Monday, Nov. 16, at the Courthouse in Smithfield.
- Adopted a budget for water main improvements along U.S. 70 from Buffalo Road to just west of U.S. 301 in Selma. The $1.02 million will cover technical services and easement acquisition. The construction budget will come later.
- Agreed to move forward with the design of an expansion of the Johnston County Workforce Development Center on Bestwood Drive near Clayton. With a design in hand, the training center will be able to seek grant dollars to help pay for the project, an estimated $8.5 million.
- Rezoned 108.57 acres in the 3800 block of Richardson Bridge Road in Bentonville Township. The industrial zoning will allow a sand-mining operation.

- Amended the fee schedule for treating industrial wastewater. Public Utilities will eliminate the high-strength surcharge and instead charge industrial customers based on the makeup of their wastewater — chemicals, biomedical waste, nitrogen, etc.
- Endorsed an N.C. Department of Transportation plan to add the following streets to its maintenance list: Pate Landing Drive and Faucette Drive in Pate Landing subdivision, Micro Township.
- Gave the Sheriff's Office permission to file two grant applications. An $11,561 grant application, if approved, would purchase five in-car radar guns. A second grant application for $13,014 would buy 26 Stop Sticks.
- Appointed James O'Malley to the Pine Level Planning Board. He will represent the area outside the town limits but within Pine Level's planning jurisdiction.
- OK'd four budget revisions. The Public Health Department has received a $35,000 state grant for maternity care. The Health Department has received another $60,000 from United HealthCare Services Inc. for diapers and wipes. Other budget revisions are for the jail, which has received $800.51 in miscellaneous revenue, and the Sheriff's Office, which has collected $2,696.79 in Controlled Substance Tax, insurance proceeds and miscellaneous revenue.
- Took no action after a closed session on real estate and legal matters.