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OUR WORK REIGNS

NCLGIA SUMMER CONFERENCE 2026 · THURSDAY, JULY 23 · 9:00 AM

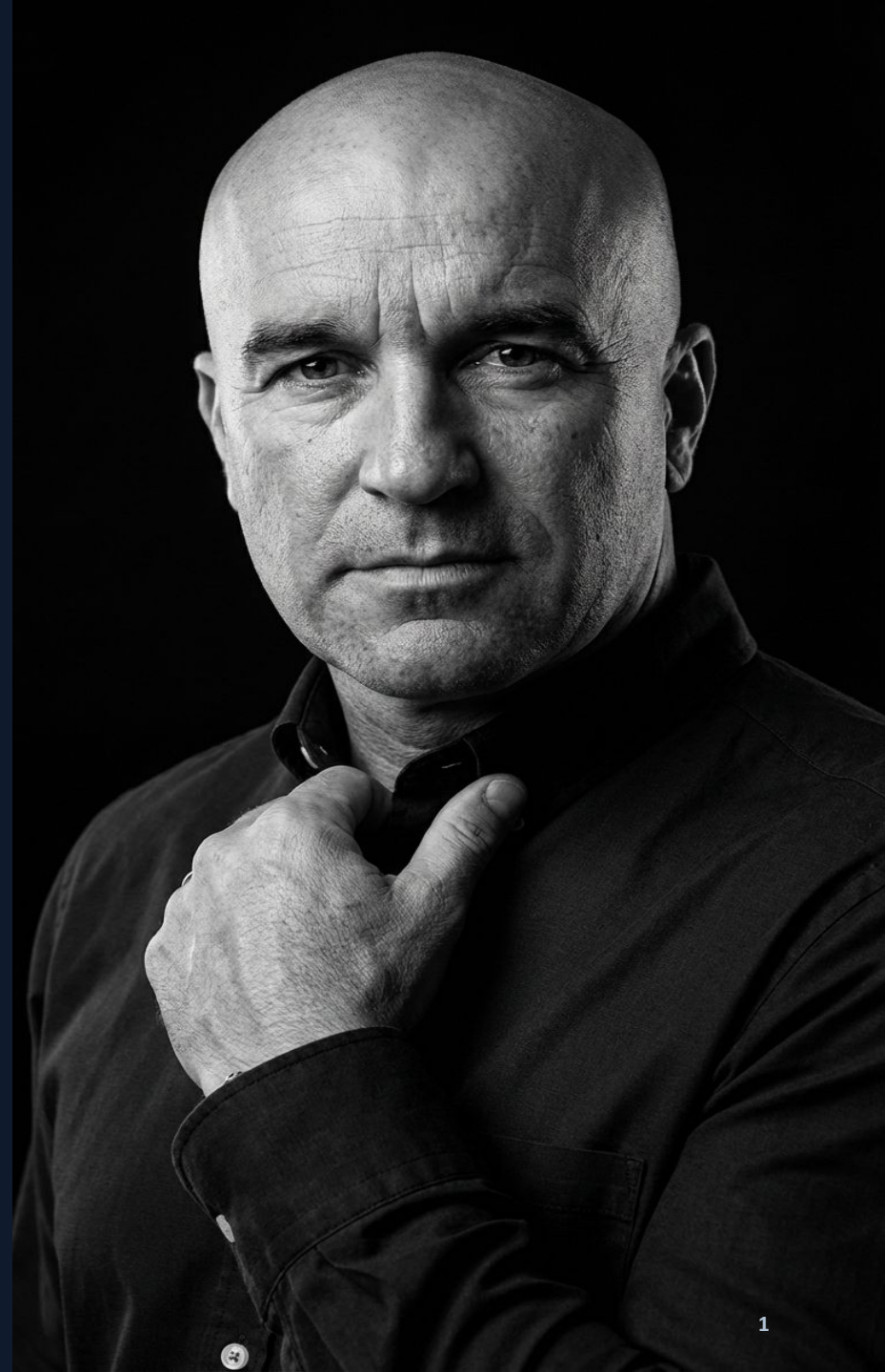
AI in Local Government

From the manager's desk to the machine.

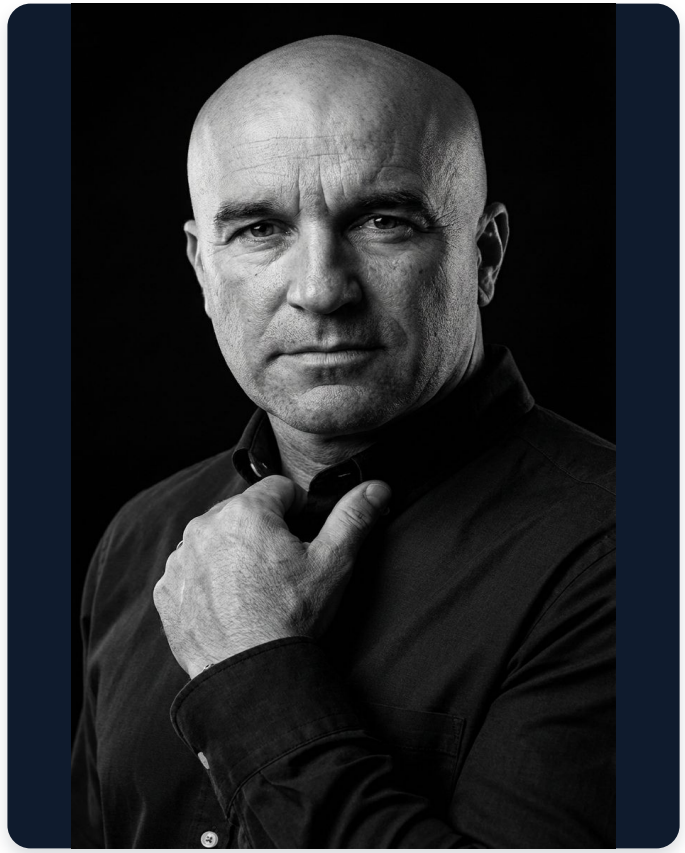
CONNECT

Christopher S. Turner

Former NC City & County Manager · Kingdom Media Company



I've sat in the City/County chair with you.



City Manager · Morehead City, NC + Interim Town Mgr · Newport, NC

Ran the budget, the audit, the public-records requests. The 2 a.m. emails, and hurricanes, lots of hurricanes.

Asst. County Manager · Carteret County, NC

Public funds, public trust, public scrutiny, and more hurricanes not the hockey kind. (NCGS Ch. 153)

Dept. of Human Resources · ECU, Greenville, NC

Personnel, employee relations, staff training & development. (NCGS Ch. 126, brace yourself.)

23 years · 3 startups · AI systems developer

Now I build AI + content infrastructure for government, corporate & private clients. (free from NCGS)

Meta & Google Ads Certified · Kingdom Media Co.

I translate hype into things you can actually use on Monday morning.

The point: I'm not a vendor selling you software. I'm a colleague, showing you what works.

HERE'S MY PROMISE

By 10:00 AM you'll do three things on your phone you didn't know you could do.

No new budget line. No IT ticket. No 40-page policy first. Just you, your phone, and better judgment.

We're in an AI gold rush. Local government is the frontier.

> *"It really feels like we've been in an AI gold rush... tons of vendors rushing into this space and targeting local governments."*
>
> **— Kristi Nickodem, UNC School of Government**

The promise

- Faster drafting, cleaner minutes
- Better planning & modeling
- 24/7 resident service
- Do more with the staff you have

The peril

- Confident, wrong answers
- Public-records & privacy exposure
- Bias in decisions that affect rights of the public
- Vendors overselling the magic

Your job isn't to pick a side. It's to weigh them, deliberately.

WHY YOUR SEAT IS DIFFERENT

Four reasons public finance can't “move fast and break things.”

It's a public record

Prompts and outputs can be discoverable. Assume everything you type could end up in the newspaper.

Sensitive data

Personnel files, taxpayer data, closed-session detail — never belongs in a public AI tool.

Decisions affect rights

When government decides, constitutional and due-process obligations attach. A chatbot can't own that.

Public trust is the asset

You spend decades earning it and one bad automated answer to spend it. Accuracy is non-negotiable.

(read this slide again)

THE PART YOUR AUDITOR WILL LOVE

You don't need permission to be curious. You need a framework.

UNC School of Government built one for exactly this room. Steal it. (aka. borrow it, and give credit.)

SOG WORKSHEETS

Three questions before any AI use case.

Written by Michael Welker & Maura Toole, UNC SOG

WORKSHEETS

1

Evaluate the opportunity

Start small. Define one clear, discrete use case that's permissible and answers a real need.

2

Evaluate the risk

Rate accuracy, data sensitivity, bias, transparency, cost & vendor risk: low, moderate, or significant.

3

Weigh value vs. risk

Map it on a grid. High value + low risk = go. High value + high risk = add safeguards first.

The map that tells you where to start.

PUBLIC VALUE ▲

START HERE

High value · Low risk

Examples: Minutes, first drafts, FAQ answers

ADD SAFEGUARDS

High value · High risk

Examples: Public-facing chatbots, decision support

MAYBE LATER

Low value · Low risk

Examples: Public Spending Graphics, Nice-to-haves; no urgency

SKIP IT

Low value · High risk

Examples: Automated Email Response, Not worth the exposure

RISK ▶

ALREADY HAPPENING IN NC

Where local governments are actually using AI.

Meeting minutes

Draft minutes & summaries from a recording clerk reviews, doesn't retype.

First-draft policy

Ordinances, memos, staff reports started in seconds, edited by the expert.

Budget narrative

Turn the numbers into plain-English narrative and year-over-year explanations.

Resident FAQ / 24-7

Answer routine permit, tax, and service questions on your website.

Summarize 300 pages

Digest long reports, RFPs, and public comment into the decisions that matter.

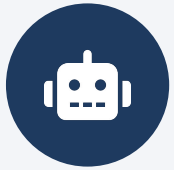
Translate & plain-language

Reach every resident in their language and at a readable grade level.

Two kinds of AI: the assistant and the colleague.

Generative AI | the assistant

Creates content on demand. Brilliant and fast — but always needs you to steer and decide.



Agentic AI | the colleague

Plans and finishes a whole job on its own — using your systems, within your guardrails.

	GENERATIVE AI | the assistant	AGENTIC AI | the colleague
Autonomy	Waits for your prompts	Plans & executes independently
Scope	Single-response interactions	Multi-step workflows, end to end
Tools	Limited to its chat window	Connects to your systems: ERP, bank, portals
Example	"Explain this budget variance"	"Run month-end close for all departments"
Oversight	Review each output	Review the final outcome

REAL WORLD · AGENTIC AI

What autonomous agents already do in a finance office.

Automated reconciliation

Reconciles 50+ bank accounts, flags discrepancies, researches exceptions, and drafts the report.

40 hrs/month → 2 hrs of review

Grant compliance monitoring

Watches spending across federal grants, checks award terms, files required reports, alerts you to issues.

Continuous — not quarterly

Vendor management

Tracks certifications, insurance renewals and W-9 updates; keeps compliance docs current.

1,000+ vendors, proactively

Budget monitoring & alerts

Analyzes spending daily, predicts overruns, notifies department heads, suggests reallocations.

Early warning — no year-end surprises

Agents act within your guardrails, you review the outcome, not every keystroke.

CLOSE TO HOME

The same AI playbook, but on the North Carolina coast.

Occupancy (room) tax analysis	AI drafts monthly collection reports for your tourism board; an agent watches collections across jurisdictions and flags anomalies.	BOTH
Disaster & FEMA recovery	An agent tracks FEMA reimbursements, monitors project worksheets, reconciles expenses, and keeps documentation audit-ready.	AGENTIC
State & LGC reporting	Agents compile unit data for NC Treasurer / Local Government Commission filings, built for statute compliance.	AGENTIC
Transparency & public records	Agents keep expenditure and transparency data current while preserving accuracy and records compliance.	AGENTIC
Policy & statute compliance	AI drafts policy aligned to NC General Statutes; an agent monitors legislative changes and flags the updates you need.	BOTH

Examples adapted for NC local government.

THE PAYOFF

What early adopters report.

30–50%

time saved on routine tasks

The win isn't speed, it's freeing your team for the judgment work only people can do.

FASTER

- Report generation, 80% faster
- Budget drafting, 60% faster
- Reconciliation, 75% faster
- Policy research, 50% faster

BETTER

- Fewer data-entry errors
- More consistent documentation
- Earlier identification of issues
- Stronger compliance tracking

Ranges reported by early government-finance AI adopters (incl. Todd Woodward, Creative People Consulting, 2025). Results vary by use case.

NOW THE FUN PART

Pull out your phones.

Six tools. Each one: what it does, why it's a 'wow,' and one thing to do right now.

Scan the code, keep the app.

Otter.ai

Your meeting shows up with its own note-taker.

WHAT IT IS

An AI assistant that joins (or records) a meeting, transcribes it live, and writes the summary and action items automatically. (**Caution:** Public Records Act)

THE WOW Walk out of a budget meeting with the minutes already drafted before you reach the parking lot.

Consent first: tell participants they're being recorded and follow local rules. NC is a one-party-consent state, but be kind, so you don't have to rewind.

DO THIS NOW

1. Open otter.ai or the app
2. Hit Record at your next meeting
3. Get transcript + summary + action items instantly

SCAN TO GET IT

TOOL 2 OF 6

Plaud

A pin that turns every conversation into searchable notes.

WHAT IT IS

A wearable AI recorder (NotePin / Note Pro) plus an app that bridges in-person meetings, phone calls, and online calls into one clean summary. 112 languages. SOC 2 / HIPAA options. (**Caution:** Public Records Act)

THE WOW A $159 device, or the free app, that remembers every decision so you can stay present in the room.

Same rule: get consent and follow record-keeping law before you hit record.

DO THIS NOW

1. No device? Get the free Plaud app
2. Record a call, meeting, or voice memo
3. Get a structured summary + action items

SCAN TO GET IT

Wispr Flow

Stop typing. Just talk.

WHAT IT IS

Voice-to-text that works in every app on your phone and computer. It cleans up the 'ums,' fixes grammar, and formats as you speak, about 4x faster than typing.

THE WOW Dictate a clean, professional email while you're walking to your car. It edits itself.

DO THIS NOW

1. Install Wispr Flow (Mac, Windows, iPhone)
2. Hold the key and just talk
3. Watch rambling become a polished email

SCAN TO GET IT

TOOL 4 OF 6

NotebookLM

Drop in your 300-page budget. Ask it anything.

WHAT IT IS

Google's free research tool. Upload YOUR documents, budget, CAFR, ordinances, RFPs, and it answers only from those, with citations to the page. It can even generate an audio 'podcast' of the document.

THE WOW It won't make things up from the internet, it's grounded in your files and cites where it got the answer.

Grounded in YOUR docs = far less hallucination. Still verify the numbers.

DO THIS NOW

1. Go to notebooklm.google.com
2. Upload your budget or audit PDF
3. Ask 'what changed from last year?' — or make an Audio Overview

SCAN TO GET IT

TOOL 5 OF 6

Loom

Record it once. Kill the status meeting.

WHAT IT IS

Record your screen and your face, then share a link. The viewer watches on their time. Auto-transcript and summary included. (**Caution:** Public Records Act)

THE WOW Replace a 30-minute status meeting with a 3-minute video nobody has to schedule.

DO THIS NOW

1. Install Loom (browser or app)
2. Record a 2-minute walkthrough of a report
3. Paste the link instead of booking a meeting

SCAN TO GET IT

Linq

Tap your phone. Share everything.

WHAT IT IS

An NFC digital business card. Tap it to someone's phone and your full contact, links, and bio drop in instantly, they need no app. Update it once; it's always current.

THE WOW Never run out of business cards again, and never hand out a card with your old title on it.

DO THIS NOW

1. Order a Linq card ($14.99) or use the app
2. Tap it to any phone at the next break
3. Your contact + links land instantly

SCAN TO GET IT

PUT IT TOGETHER

The whole workflow, start to finish, in one meeting.

Capture

Record the meeting with Otter or Plaud

Summarize

Get the transcript, summary & action items

Draft

Ask ChatGPT or Claude to **write** the follow-up

Send

You edit as the expert, then hit **send**

Time to draft your next follow-up: about 90 seconds. Your judgment still runs the show.

CHATGPT

CLAUDE

Six guardrails. Put these in a one-page policy.

DO

- Assume every prompt could be a public record
- Use AI for first drafts — never final decisions
- Verify every number, fact, and citation
- Keep a human in the loop on rights, money & people
- Adopt a written AI-use policy (SOG has templates)

DON'T

- Paste confidential, personnel, closed-session or PII data into public tools
- Let the tool make the decision for you
- Trust outputs without checking the source
- Believe the vendor's magic without a pilot
- Wait for a perfect policy before you start learning

When in doubt, ask: would I be comfortable seeing this prompt on the front page?

YOUR CHALLENGE

Three things to do before Monday's coffee.

1

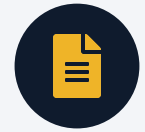
Transcribe one meeting

Use Otter or Plaud at your next meeting. Get the minutes for free. Low risk, instant value.

2

Feed NotebookLM one document

Upload a public budget or report. Ask it three questions. Make an audio overview for your drive home.



3

Draft one routine memo

Have ChatGPT or Claude draft a memo you'd normally dread then edit it as the expert you are.

None of these need a budget, a vote, or an IT ticket. That's the point.

IF YOU REMEMBER ONE THING

AI won't replace public servants.

It replaces the busy work that keeps you from serving.

Start small.

Stay human.

Move now.

TAKE IT WITH YOU

Everything from today #tada One scan away.

The full toolkit

Every tool, link & how-to from this talk

UNC SOG framework

The AI evaluation worksheets & use cases

Coates' Canons

Kristi Nickodem on AI, records & the law

Connect with Turner

Bring AI to your organization, Let's talk

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Thank you, NCLGIA.

Let's build something that serves your community.

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CONNECT WITH TURNER

Questions? Let's talk, I'll be here through the break.