

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Monday, November 3, 2008

9:00 A.M. Worksession

**MINUTES**

Place: Commissioners' Room, second floor, Durham County Government Administrative Complex, 200 E. Main Street, Durham, NC

Present: Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow, Vice-Chairman Michael D. Page, and Commissioners Lewis A. Cheek, Philip R. Cousin Jr. and Becky M. Heron

Absent: None

Presider: Chairman Reckhow

**Four-Day Workweek**

County Manager Mike Ruffin introduced this item. He stated that the BOCC requested that the Human Resources Department prepare a feasibility study on four-day work weeks for County employees. The Sustainability Manager, Human Resources, Finance, and General Services Department staffs reviewed the organizational and environmental impacts of the County changing to a four-day work week.

County Manager Ruffin added that several County departments have been allowed to deploy four-day schedules for its employees provided their departments continue to remain open for business five days per week. Departments submitted evaluations regarding the implementation of four-day scheduling strategies with their FY 2010 budget requests so that determinations can be made as to whether departments may continue the alternate schedules.

Marqueta Welton, Director of Human Resources, briefed that Board on the following:

**Overview**

With the cost of gasoline reaching new highs daily, the notion of a four-day work week has sparked considerable national interest. In some form or another, compressed work weeks have been around for quite some time. A compressed work week is one in which employees work the same amount of hours in fewer than the customary number of days per week. In a typical four-day work week, employees work four, 10-hour days with three consecutive days off.

The 2008 National Study of Employers funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation found that 41% of employers allow employees to compress their work week by working longer hours on fewer days. Retention of employees in general was the number one reason cited for workplace flexibility, followed by helping employees manage work and family life.

Across the nation, the four-day work week is gaining popularity among local and state governments. While Utah was the first state to implement a mandatory four-day work week, Oklahoma and Vermont are seriously considering legislation for the same. The Wall Street Journal reports that the concept is spreading to California, West Virginia, Minnesota, and Georgia. A spokesperson for the National Association of State Personnel Directors states that a good number of states are encouraging their agencies and managers to offer a four-day work week whenever possible.

In North Carolina, Wayne County implemented a four-day work week, which began August 1, 2008. Other local governments in North Carolina are considering the change, including Henderson County and Anson County. Research by the National Association of Counties lists five counties nationwide that have four-day work weeks, with numerous other counties contemplating the change, including Fairfax County and Arlington County in Virginia.

Birmingham, AL, Avondale, AZ, Concord, NH, Coconut Creek, FL, City of North Las Vegas, NV and Henderson, NV are among cities that already have a four-day work week in place. The objective in all cases is to save money for both employees and the organization. In some instances, the four-day work week was used as a means of compensating employees when the organization was unable to give raises.

A Brigham Young University researcher estimates that about 1 in 6 U.S. cities with populations above 25,000 offer employees a four-day work week. The university studied the impact of a four-day work week on job satisfaction and work-family balance. According to their study, employees perceived that the alternative schedule increased their productivity and their ability to serve the citizens. The research found that employees working the 4/10 workweek experienced lower levels of conflicts between work and home than their counterparts working other schedules. A majority of workers also reported thinking that people's access to city services had improved under the modified schedule.

#### Benefits of a Four-Day Week

Possible benefits of a four-day work week include:

- Extended business hours for customers to transact County business
- Reduced operational costs related to utilities, fuel, security, etc.
- Reduced commuting time for employees
- Reduced personal expenses for employees related to transportation, childcare, or other daily work-related expenses
- Better recruitment and retention results
- Increased employee morale, job satisfaction, and loyalty resulting from better work/life balance and more time for family
- Increased productivity and customer service
- Decreased absenteeism and use of sick leave
- Decreased labor costs due to turnover
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants

### Drawbacks to a Four-Day Week

Possible drawbacks of a four-day work week include:

- Fewer days for public access to services
- Difficulty managing daycare concerns (primarily an issue with respect to evening hours)
- Insufficient staff to cover operations if open 5 days
- Lack of adequate supervision if open 5 days

### The County's Current Trend

In the late 1980's, Durham County implemented an informal policy allowing alternative work schedules. Individual department heads are afforded discretion in establishing flexible ("flex") work schedules for their staff. Presently, 11 of 24 County departments allow employees some form of a flex work schedule. Of the 11 departments offering flex schedules, seven have implemented a four-day work week for staff while maintaining a five-day business operation. Three additional departments offer other alternative work schedules.

### Interest Across the County

Eighty percent of the 643 Durham County Government employees who responded to a survey about alternative work schedules said that they would prefer a four-day work week over a five-day schedule. Fourteen percent prefer five days with 5% being unsure.

With a few exceptions, most County departments are very interested in offering staff a four-day work week. For several departments, a four-day work week is only feasible if the County has a four-day business week, such as Mondays through Thursdays with everyone being off on Fridays. These departments include Public Health, Mental Health, Register of Deeds, Tax Administration, Engineering and Cooperative Extension.

A four-day business week would also eliminate some concerns expressed by employees regarding a four-day work week. Those concerns include calculation of accrued leave for vacation and sick leave, staffing issues during vacations, being called to work on a day off, and coordinating work with fellow employees.

Departments that are not good candidates for a four-day business week include the Youth Home, Sheriff's Department, EMS, Animal Control, Library, Criminal Justice Resource Center and DSS. Nevertheless, these departments may still offer staff some form of alternative work schedules.

### County Employee Demographics

The average monthly commuting expense incurred by Durham County employees is roughly \$277 or \$3,330 annually. Approximately 700 of the County's 1860 employees commute to residences beyond Durham County limits. The farthest commute is more than 2.5 hours each way at 308 miles roundtrip. It is estimated that employees could save a combined \$1.2M annually by commuting to work one less day per week.

### Potential Savings for Durham County Government

By moving to a four-day business week, the County could realize savings in expenses tied to fleet usage and building operations. Finance Department staff analyzed current fleet usage and projected approximately \$30,624 in annual savings for operating County-owned vehicles one less day per week.

General Services Department staff looked at five sample buildings of the 50 operated by the County and estimated potential savings if converted to a four-day operation. The sample buildings were selected because of the ability of the departments therein to close in their entirety one weekday (Fridays). Of the five buildings assessed, three are leased and would not provide any benefit to the County if operated fewer days per week. The two remaining sample buildings (Fire Marshall and Public Health) could generate \$42,078 to \$58,631 in savings annually if converted from a five-day operation to a four-day operation.

Tobin Freid, Durham County's Sustainability Manager, discussed the following:

### Greenhouse Effect: Energy Savings and Environmental Impact

In 2007, Durham County adopted a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction plan ([www.durhamnc.gov/GHG](http://www.durhamnc.gov/GHG)). This plan set a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 50% from municipal sources. Adopting a four-day business week could affect GHG emissions in three ways. First, buildings with automated energy systems could use less energy by being shut down for three days a week, instead of the current two days a week. These savings would only be achieved with a four day business week. In a four-day work week in which County offices are still open five days, we would see an increase in energy use and GHG emissions. Many of the County's current buildings are not equipped with automated energy systems. The savings would be harder to achieve in those cases.

Second, the County could realize some fuel savings from reduced fleet use under a four-day business week. While many trips that would have occurred on Fridays would still have to occur Monday through Thursday during the extended hours, there are some savings from being able to stay at a site longer to complete a task rather than having to drive back multiple times. Also, there would be fewer miles traveled to and from the vehicles "home base".

Third, eliminating commute trips for one day a week would reduce the amount of GHG emissions from employee vehicles. This would be true under either the four-day workweek or four-day business week.

Following is a look at how reducing Durham County's business week by one day would impact energy usage as well as excess greenhouse gas emissions in a sample of buildings.

Energy and Pollution savings

The measurement of potential energy and pollution savings are shown by the following:

kWh: A Kilowatt hour (kWh) is a unit of energy which measures the amount of electricity used.

CO2: Carbon dioxide is an atmospheric gas that traps heat in the Earth's atmosphere contributing to the greenhouse effect. It is emitted into the air through burning carbon based fuels (coal, oil, wood), as well as through animal respiration.

NOx: Nitrogen oxides are released to the air from the exhaust of motor vehicles and coal-burning power plants. When combined with volatile organic compounds in the presence of sunlight, they cause smog. Exposure to high levels of nitrogen oxides can damage respiratory airways.

SOx: Sulfur dioxide is emitted during the combustion of fossil fuels, including coal burned in power plants. It contributes to acid rain and respiratory illnesses.

Ms. Freid estimated the following potential energy and pollution savings for three sample facilities if the business week is reduced to four days:

Public Health Building

General Services estimates a 31-43% energy savings. That would equate to an energy and pollution savings of:

	31%	43%
kWh	776,300	1,076,800
CO2 (lbs)	1,615,400	2,240,700
CO2 (tons)	800	1,100
NOx (lbs)	2,000	2,800
SOx (lbs)	5,000	7,000

This is roughly equivalent to the CO2 intake of 124,200 trees (31%) to 172,300 trees (43%).

Fire Marshal

General Services estimates a 25-38% savings. That would equate to an energy and pollution savings of:

	25%	38%
kWh	607	900
CO2 (lbs)	1200	1900

CO2 (tons)	.63	1
NOx (lbs)	1.5	2
SOx (lbs)	4	6

This is roughly equivalent to the CO2 intake of 97 trees (25%) and 147 trees (38%).

#### County Engineering (Parrish Street)

While the cost of the leased space remains constant, a business week reduced by one (1) day could yield a 20% energy and pollution savings of:

	20%
kWh	11,900
CO2 (lbs)	24,875
CO2 (tons)	12
NOx (lbs)	31
SOx (lbs)	77

This is roughly equivalent to the CO2 intake of 1900 trees.

#### Vehicle Fuel Energy

A four-day business week will yield an estimated 7,000 to 8,800 gallons of saved fuel for County-owned vehicles. This equates to 141,000 to 176,000 pounds of CO2 avoided (71 to 88 tons).

Assuming that all County employees participate in some form of four-day work week, an estimated 2,035,000 in employee commuting miles could be avoided. This equates to roughly 40,700,000 pounds of CO2 avoided (20,350 tons).

#### Hours of Operation

The County's normal business hours for core services are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Several County departments have hours which begin as early as 7:00 a.m. and end as late as 8:30 p.m. With the exception of the Sheriff, EMS and Fire Marshall departments, all County employees work a 37.5-hour work week with one hour for lunch.

In most cases, departments report Fridays as generally being light traffic days and the least demanding on staff for services. Should the County choose a four-day business week, Fridays would be the logical day to close.

#### Summary

Current market and employment trends favor consideration of adopting a uniform four-day work week policy to offer some relief to employees from economic pressures. Should the County consider a uniform four-day work week? A policy providing for a shortened business week with offices being closed on Fridays will allow maximum employee participation. However, while a uniform alternative schedule may be feasible for many,

some departments must operate five or more days and may not be included in plans that provide for a four-day business week.

In addition to extended services hours for the public to conduct business, other advantages of adopting a four-day business week include the County reaping financial benefits in savings tied to lower operating expenses. Also, a four-day business week would have a positive environmental impact by reducing greenhouse gases through energy and pollution savings. Drawbacks to a four-day business week include fewer days for public access to certain services and difficulty for some employees in managing childcare concerns.

County Manager Ruffin provided clarification to the Board regarding the administration's position about piloting a four-day workweek

Commissioner Heron expressed concerns about departments being available to assist Commissioners when needed. She commended the Clerk's office for doing an outstanding job in the absence of Vonda Sessoms, Durham County Clerk to the Board.

Vice-Chairman Page informed staff that there was never an intention to mandate a four-day work week schedule. He stated that the objective was to review additional ways to provide incentives that would assist Durham County employees. He expressed the desire for departments to review feasible options for employees. He appreciated the idea of expanding the hours of operation to assist citizens.

Chairman Reckhow concurred with Vice-Chairman Page concerns.

Ms. Welton informed the Board that this report was never presented as a mandate, but rather as means to enable employees to experience savings during the current economic hardship.

#### Directives

1. Consider piloting financial classes for employees.
2. Bring information to the Board about on how energy saving projections are determined.
3. Develop a list of all benefits given to employees (i.e. vacation days, flex dollars, flex scheduling, etc.)

#### **Update from ABC Board**

Chuck Watts, Chairman of the Durham County ABC Board, provided an update from the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.

Mr. Watts informed the Board how profits from the ABC Board were being utilized. He stated that the objective was to make sure everything is handled on a sustainable basis. He alerted the Board of the challenges regarding the opening of a new store.

Mr. Watts informed that Board that a public hearing was held for the Raven Croft Community to entertain the residents' concerns. In response to the public's issues, the ABC Board entered into a lease arrangement that allows an early-out option in event that something occurs.

Mr. Watts added that the ABC Board has continued to have programs that educate retailers about responsible sales.

Emily Page, ABC Board Member, responded to Commissioner Heron's inquiry about the hour of operations within the shopping center, which is from 9a.m. to 9 p.m.

The Board thanked Mr. Watts for the report and expressed appreciation for excellent leadership, stewardship, and steady growth.

#### Directives

1. Consider ways to help educate the citizens about responsible drinking.
2. Have periodic meetings with the citizens to gather input about the progress.

#### **Durham Cooperative Extension – Coordinated Transportation – Durham County Access (DCA) Update**

Delphine A. Sellars, Cooperative Extension Director, introduced this item. She presented the Board of County Commissioners an update on the operational and procedural changes implemented by Durham County Access (DCA). She highlighted the efforts to improve the transportation services of elderly, handicapped, rural, and Work First citizens.

Ms. Sellars asked that the Board approve DCA's plans to explore the feasibility of consolidating the management and services of DCA with those of Durham Area Transit Authority (DATA). Ms. Sellars added that North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has requested that the Board of County Commissioners approve a resolution and develop a Memorandum of Understanding, that upon completion of an assessment of the data and effectiveness of the Community Transportation Association of America Institute for Transportation Coordination 1-year project and/or NCDOT-PTD 5-year City-County Study, Durham County Government will, if appropriate for the needs of the citizens of the County, pursue the development of the consolidation of the DATA and DCA systems.

Commissioner Heron expressed frustrations about ensuring that citizens who live outside the City limits have access to transportation without having to incur the expense.

Ms. Sellars reiterated that the changes made to the resolution were of upmost priority as it relates to Durham County citizens

Joseph S. Kilsheimer, Member, Transportation Advisory Board, stated that the primary focus was to ensure that disabled citizens, as well as the rural general public, would continue to be served.



Commissioner Cheek stressed the importance of having a County representative serve on the DATA Board to maintain a level of advice.

Ms. Sellars responded to Chairman Reckhow's concerns about the regional study being dropped by the State and whether interface would be an option with TTA.

#### Directives

1. DATA and Durham County to consider a contract with TTA to operate the program to provide transportation.
2. Place on the November 10 consent agenda.

#### **Resolution Amending Economic Development Policy**

County Attorney Chuck Kitchen introduced this item stating that the Board of Commissioners is requested to adopt an amendment to its Economic Development Policy which provides that in lieu of providing incentives, the County may construct structured parking. This provision would only be effective in the Downtown Government Services District. Additionally, structured parking would only be constructed where it would accommodate the parking needs of government buildings.

County Attorney Kitchen asked that the Board consider providing parking due to the increase parking needs within the County.

The Board discussed the terms of the provision.

#### Directive

Place on the November 10 Regular Session consent agenda.

#### **Durham Emergency Communications Center (DECC) Technology Grant and Request for Surcharge Budget Amendment**

Tonya Pearce, Assistant Director, Durham Emergency Communications Center, introduced this item. She stated that Durham Emergency Communications Center (DECC) received a grant approval for funding for \$214,605, to implement oblique imagery technology. DECC requested additional funding totaling \$65,550 to be used with the grant. She stated that additional costs include: the cost of an interface to the Computer Aided Dispatch system (initial charge of \$8,450) with a recurring annual maintenance cost of \$1,350; a one-time cost of \$3,600 for external hard drives for the most efficient use of the software; and \$52,150 to cover the cost of additional sectors being imaged at a more detailed resolution than provided for in the initial grant—to allow for usage by other City and County departments through GIS, such as Tax Administration. City Council received a presentation at their October 23, 2008 worksession and approved the item.

Ms. Pearce discussed the following:

- Recommendation
- Background
- Issues/Analysis
- Alternatives
- Financial Impact

Ms. Pearce stated that DECC requested that the Board of County Commissioners authorize a budget amendment in the amount of \$65,550 from remaining landline surcharge funds to enhance the purchase of oblique imagery technology from Pictometry International using grant monies in the amount of \$214,605.

The Board asked the following:

- Would the request for additional funding come from the City and the County?
- How would this technology assist Durham County Sheriff's Office with their communication issues?
- Will training be offered to staff that would help utilize the technology?

Kimberly Simpson, Tax Administrator, informed the Board that the Tax Department currently utilizes an older version of the technology. She stated that she was most comfortable with the Emergency Communications decision to implement the system.

Ms. Pearce responded to Chairman Reckhow's inquiry about the renewal process stating that a two-year replacement cycle has been recommended for 911 purposes.

The Board commended Ms. Pearce on her efforts with the oblique imagery technology project.

#### Directives

1. Consider a briefing at the next department head meeting regarding the computer aided dispatch system.
2. Check with the Sheriff to make sure the technology is compatible with their technology.
3. Place on November 10 consent agenda.

#### **Proposed Revision of Nonprofit Agency Funding Policy**

Pam Meyer, Budget Director, introduced this item. She stated that the County provides funding to nonprofit organizations through a competitive grant process that is conducted in accordance with the Nonprofit Agency Funding Policy. This policy was adopted on January 14, 2002 and was amended on December 12, 2005. Staff recommended that the policy be updated to align with best practices and to increase financial and performance accountability.

Ms. Meyer conferred the following:

- Nonprofit Funding Policy
- Currently Funded Agencies
- Future Funding and Monitoring Recommendations
- Quarterly Reports (Financial & Program) and Payment Timing
- Grant Funding Categories
- Staff Responsibilities

Ms. Meyer responded to Vice-Chairman Page's inquiry regarding organizations that would be able to utilize reimbursement procedure.

Laura Jentsen, Assistant to the County Manager, replied to Vice-Chairman Page's question about whether any nonprofits agencies, receive mini grants as well as nonprofit RBA grants. She stated that RBA mini grants are meant to be project specific rather than nonprofit funding. This includes operational support.

Commissioner Heron asked the following:

- Do nonprofits have to be part of the RBA in order to show the results pertaining to what the Board has given the organization?
- How will the County check to see if the organizations meet the RBA requirements?
- How can the County see the nonprofit organizations accomplishments?

Commissioner Heron suggested that the Board take caution with the amount of funds to be awarded to nonprofits due to the economic crisis. She proposed that the Board enforce the deadline for application process.

County Manager Ruffin expressed concerns about the revenue for the upcoming year. He stated that a discussion would be held regarding expansion funding. He expounded about the nonprofits financial and program monitoring.

Commissioner Cousin inquired about how the RBA process affects the current nonprofits in terms of participation.

Ms. Jentsen stated that participation is encouraged throughout the nonprofit organizations. Nonprofits have to report meetings that have been attended as well as any challenges that were faced.

Commissioner Cheek stated that the best investment of County dollars is in entities which are proven entities that have the ability to provide services that need to be in the community; this cannot be dependent upon start-up grants.

County Attorney Chuck Kitchen provided input about the level of insurance the County requires.

Directives

1. Review reports to ensure that the organizations are doing what is required.
2. Review the guidelines relating to capital assets.
3. Consider detailed guidelines as it relates to auditing; copy the Board.
4. Place the Nonprofit Policy on the November 10 consent agenda.

Closed Session

Commissioner Cheek moved, seconded by Vice-Chairman Page to adjourn to closed session pursuant to G.S. 143.318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney and to preserve the attorney-client privilege.

The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Reckhow adjourned the meeting at 12:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela M. McIver  
Administrative Assistant  
Clerk to the Board's office