

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

Monday, January 2, 2024

9:00 A.M. Work Session

MINUTES

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

Present: Chair Nida Allam, Vice-Chair Nimasheena Burns, and Commissioners Heidi
Carter, Brenda Howerton and Wendy Jacobs

Presider: Chair Brenda Howerton

Zoom Hybrid

Participants: 6

Citizen Comments

The Board of County Commissioners provided a 30-minute comment period to allow Durham County citizens an opportunity to speak. Citizens were given the option to deliver their Citizen Comments in-person or virtually via email to the Clerk no later than Sunday, J 1st at 12 noon.

Kyle Lampart and Larkin Coffey stated the current library schedule worked for staff and asked that the library not be open for seven (7) days of the week due to the staff shortage. They also requested the County to hire an independent contractor to audit staffing and help mitigate concerns.

John Davis, shared the following statement regarding the library:

Durham BOCC,

"I write as a substitute librarian in support of the Library Workers Union (LWU). We subs are officially one-tenth of County employees. We are scheduled for termination (forced resignation) every 11 months with no guarantee of being hired back. We travel around to all the library locations and see first-hand the results of the short staffing that the LWU is asking the County to address. Permanent Library staff are always pleasant to patrons, rarely, if ever, showing the frustration we feel at canceled programs, having to cover for absent workers, and the general feelings of always being behind.

Getting fired every 11 months has the effect of making us "gig workers," that is, subject to the unclear human resource variables of our employer with little regard for our family and personal lives. This situation is inherently unstable and is itself a source of decreased morale among the staff. It also makes people like me shy to testify openly about what I know since I could simply not be re-hired in retaliation.

The citizens of Durham County deserve for their Library to be open on Sundays, but without a parallel plan to at least maintain- never mind increase- the quality of work life for the staff which provides all Library services, it is no surprise that we are talking about these issues.

Please direct, and provide funding for, the Library Administration to a) continue to fill open positions and improve the timeframe in which people are hired, and b) establish work schedules that do not require working 7 days in a row.”

Consent Agenda

The Board was requested to review the following Consent Agenda items for the January Regular Sessions.

23-0762 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 24BCC00044 Appropriating \$175,000 of General Fund Fund Balance to Support the Creation and Operation of a New Dedicated Department/Fund Center for the Durham County Public Information Office

David Ades, Assistant Director of Budget and Management Services, clarified this would be an additional expenditure as the cost needed to be allocated differently.

23-0911 Approval to Renew a Contract with Accela, Inc. in the Amount of \$42,770.82

Commissioner Jacobs asked how the County could promote the integrated one call system to reflect what County services were offered and linked to the system. County Manager Sowell stated she would inform the Public Information Office to provide additional information on how to promote County services within the integrated one call system.

Directive:

- **Public Information Office to provide information on how to promote County offered services for integrated one call system.**

23-0920 Approval of Contract with Durham Center for Senior Life for Supporting Older Adults to Access Needed Services in the Amount of \$40,000

Mary Oxendine, Durham County Food Security Coordinator, stated the Durham Center for Senior Life currently had one (1) part-time employee and requested to expand the position to one (1) full-time position to assist with older adults with referrals to food assistance and other services. She added a non-profit grant agreement would be created to help reduce the waiting list from Social Services for the Meals on Wheels program.

23-0924 Approval of a contract amendment to increase the Freese and Nichols Project Management Services (FR# 20-398) for the Snow Hill Road Pump Station Project (RFQ 19-040) in the amount of \$416,360, bringing the total contract amount from \$405,000 to \$821,360, and to authorize the County Manager to execute the amendment and any related contracts, including amendments, not to exceed \$841,360.

Claudia Hager, Deputy County Manager, stated conversations were held with the City to finalize the amount of commitment to protect market share and expand the region in the County. She added, with the project being funded through the Capital Improvement Plan, it would be managed by the County with contributions from the City. Vince Chirichella, PE, Senior Project Manager, added the Cabin Branch neighborhood operated on septic systems and the drainage to the Snow Hill Station would help home and business owners.

24-0015 Approval of a Change in Vehicle Purchases for the Durham County Sheriff's Office FY 2023-24 Fleet Acquisition Plan to Replace the Purchase of 17 Ford Hybrid Interceptors with 17 Ford EcoBoosts

Sheriff Birkhead clarified due to the market, the Interceptors were not available, however; the EcoBoosts were equal in comparison. He continued to say due to the change in the economy the Sheriff's Office would no longer use Dodge Chargers as their vehicles.

There were no questions regarding the items below:

23-0889 Budget Ordinance Amendment No.24BCC00069 Appropriating \$259,000 in General Fund Fund Balance and Approving a Contract Increase with Farragut Systems, Inc. for the Tax Administration Department

23-0910 Approval to amend a Contract with SAP America to increase the total amount by \$123,771.01 (for a new total amount of \$163,710.02).

23-0921 Approval of a Contract Amendment with Carolina Civilworks, Inc. for Emergency and Scheduled Collection System Repair Services in the Amount of \$150,000, Bringing the Contract Amount from \$160,000 to \$310,000 and to authorize the County Manager to execute the amendment and any other related Contract Amendments Not to Exceed \$400,000

23-0922 Approval of Contract with Tradesman Institutional Staffing Services to Provide Skilled Trade Temporary Labor for General Services in the Amount of \$40,000.00

24-0001 Approval of Contract with Express Employment Services to provide an 11-Month Contract Position for the Public Arts Coordinator for Engineering in the Amount of \$74,250.00

24-0013 Approval of Quality Mortuary & Cremation Services, Inc Contract Amendment in the Amount of \$52,000 Bringing the Total Contract to \$104,000

Discussion Items

24-0003 Approval of Public Official Bonds

The Board was requested to suspend the rules and approve the bonds of public officials on the first Monday of December of each year. Due to the recent appointments of both the Chief Financial Officer and the Tax Administrator the bond approval was requested in January. Following approval, the bonds would be recorded in the Register of Deeds Office and then sent to the Clerk of Superior Court for safekeeping.

Al Andrews, County Attorney, clarified the approval of bonds were an annual item which captured all four (4) public officials in the motion with the NC General Assembly creating statutes to identify either a formal or amount to be paid.

Vice-Chair Burns moved, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs, to suspend the rules.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Howerton, to approve the bonds to meet the statutory requirements.

The motion carried unanimously.

24-0008 ARPA Update

The Board requested to receive an update on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The American Rescue Plan delivered \$350 billion for state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. Durham County received \$62,445,275. ARPA funds supported several priorities including a public health response due to COVID-19, addressed negative economic impacts, replaced public sector revenue loss, and funded premium pay for essential workers. Funding use also addressed water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure and other priorities as identified in the US Treasury Final rule. Funding must be encumbered by 2024, with all invoices paid by 2026.

Claudia Hager, Deputy County Manager, responded to questions about contributing County funding to existing funds and the process of collaborating with the City. She stated the RFP was framed towards funds on a loan effort versus just land trust efforts and the City planned to contribute to the existing loan fund, however; they were unsure of the timing.

Commissioner Jacobs suggested the County Services Subcommittee be called “*County Support Services Subcommittee*” and requested Anthony Scott, Chief Executive Officer of Durham Housing Authority, provide an update on Durham Housing Authority plans involving County properties.

Peri Manns, Deputy Director of Engineering, stated a representative from Durham County would be added to the established Staff Taskforce regarding transit as well as ensuring requirements were met on loans for eligible developers for affordable housing.

Claudia Hager, Deputy County Manager, shared an RFP could be created to seek proposals from an outside entity to receive examples on how the Senior Repair Program would work. She added they wanted to find an easy approach for residents and the entity who would manage the program.

Discussion was held regarding funds for Pre-K and youth residents. Ms. Hager stated staff were aware Pre-K funds would be a priority and ARPA funds for Pre-K were set aside for the recurring expenditure.

County Manager Sowell stated an RFP could be crafted to be open and flexible to allow entities to show how they would utilize funds to address the needs of unhoused individuals.

Directive:

- **Request for DHA Anthony Scott to provide housing update regarding County properties.**

23-0815 Closed Session

The Board was requested to adjourn into Closed Session to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, in the matter of Antoni Dabrowski vs. Durham County et. al, which privilege is hereby acknowledged; pursuant to G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3).

Commissioner Carter moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Burns to go into Closed Session.

The motion carried unanimously.

Reconvene to Open Session

Chair Allam stated the Board met in closed session and provided directions to staff.

Adjournment

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter, to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shaunecie Wardrick
Administrative Assistant