

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF GUILFORD COUNTY
WORK SESSION**

Greensboro, North Carolina
June 16, 2025

PRESENT: Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston, presiding; Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster; Commissioners Kay Cashion, Carly Cooke, Mary Beth Murphy, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Pat Tillman, and Alan Perdue (via virtual communication).

ABSENT: Commissioner Brandon Gray-Hill.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Michael Halford; County Attorney Andrea Leslie-Fite; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; Deputy Clerk to the Board Ariane Webb; Deputy Clerk to the Board T’ebony Rosa; Victor Isler, Assistant County Manager; Jason Jones, Assistant County Manager; Erris Dunston, Assistant County Manager; Toy Beeninga, Budget Director; members of staff, media, and the public. Virtual participation was made available to members of the public and media partners.

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Alston welcomed those present and called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. He recognized County Manager Michael Halford.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION ON FY 2025-26 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Manager Halford introduced the agenda item and provided an overview of the FY25-26 Recommended Budget. He spoke to updated staff changes, to the Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA) programs, and to staff options to consider. He recognized Budget Director Toy Beeninga.

BUDGET REVIEW

Director Beeninga provided updates that occurred at the June 10th work session and the additional \$1.5M estimates in property tax revenue and explained the list of changes for Board consideration. He reviewed staff changes per the June 10th work session to include (1) Public Health, (2) property tax revenue, (3) adjustment to Wake Forest University contract, and (4) EMS positions to equal approximately \$1M.

Director Beeninga noted that on the initial Antimicrobial Resistant Gonorrhea Contract with Wake Forest, the revenues changed from \$172K to \$186K, based on when the positions are

hired. He further noted the staff changes document in the Board packet with an approximate \$1.5M amount.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the monetary allocations and how the Board arrived at the \$1.825M figure.

Director Beeninga spoke to property tax assessments, noting that they work monthly with the Tax Department, and the \$1.5M is from the business personal property amounts. He noted that based on tax assessments, we are seeing growth on the business personal property side. He anticipated additional growth. He shared that there was a slowdown in business personal property with growth to \$1.6M in assessed value. He explained that as of June 12th we have had \$6.5B growth re-assessed. He urged the Board to consider historical growth.

Commissioner Murphy clarified that this additional revenue is not tied to adding positions to the department and their anticipated new revenue, but rather it is revenue that came onto the books as a part of the existing team's work.

Director Beeninga confirmed.

Commissioner Murphy opined the revenue stream as a result of an annual evaluation.

Director Beeninga confirmed.

Manager Halford confirmed that values are assessed in May.

Chairman Alston questioned the staff's track record on estimates.

Director Beeninga noted that we typically come in close to the estimates. He confirmed close to or at budget for property tax. He explained that \$3-4M is not a large amount as compared to \$5M, as we have a tight property tax budget. He explained that traditionally, the collection is 99.3% and we budget at 99.8%.

Chairman Alston questioned if the additional \$1.6M in revenues added will cover the costs of bringing on the three (3) new positions.

Director Beeninga noted that we are pushing estimates to capture just the \$325K. He explained that the value added by these positions pushes the estimate and expressed confidence that these positions will cover this expense.

Manager Halford noted that he believes the inclusion of \$325K is low risk. He noted that based on the final enhancement requests that were added, staff reviewed when those costs will come online to impact the budget. He noted that the new anticipated revenues could offset the Emergency Services positions. He noted those positions that do not have county funds.

Chairman Alston questioned the net impact.

Manager Halford noted that these are two (2) separate things. He recalled the Tax Director Ben Chavis' discussion regarding the low-risk move for additional positions and offsetting expenses from the property tax collections.

Director Beeninga spoke to per department staff changes covered by the EMS ambulance charges and fees while offsetting the Rural Fire Districts. He spoke to reprioritizing funds per Board approval. He noted that there are no county funds used for the first quarter (Q1) through the fourth quarter (Q4). He explained that the strategy is to onboard twenty-six (26) Department of Social Services (DSS) positions so they are staggered.

Commissioner Jones noted those positions with no-county funding and questioned whether any of those are temporary or time-limited positions.

Director Beeninga confirmed difficulty of gauging but these addendums could change in the future.

Manager Halford noted an expectation of recurring expenses. He explained that it can be pushed out to Q1, but this is a sliding scale.

Director Beeninga noted the exclusion of vehicles since orders require two (2) to three (3) years for delivery and we can handle those separately. He noted that the Board could allocate an additional \$1.5M today based on changes or drop the utilization of the fund balance for this budget year.

HERA PROGRAM

Director Beeninga continued the presentation by speaking to staff and Board adjustments. He noted that we discussed this briefly at our March Retreat and recognized Environmental Health Division Director Paula Cox.

Director Cox provided an overview of HERA for chemical and oil spill responses. She spoke to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). She noted that HERA provides the regulatory oversight of state and local functions. She noted that the things that are done under the Guilford County well rules include well monitoring and permitting of DUMT wells. She noted that they offer monitoring of groundwater levels in our aquifer throughout the county. She highlighted updates and maintenance of an information database.

Director Cox introduced three (3) options for funding the HERA Program to include, (1) Option A – Increase in County Funds of \$35,200, (2) Option B – Increase in County Funds of \$165,200, and (3) Option C – Decrease in County Funds of \$23,837.

Commissioner Cooke spoke to supporting Option A.

Moved by Commissioner Carly Cooke, seconded by Commissioner Frankie T. Jones, Jr., to direct staff to add to the FY25-26 Recommended Budget motion for the June 18th Board Meeting, the HERA Program Option A to increase county funds of \$35,200 to (1) Maintain program and all related MOAs to include increased funding commitment from State, (2) For FY26, fund HERA through revised monitoring well permitting fee structure, and (3)

FY27 and beyond would require \$100,000 county funding in additional to the revised fee structure.

Commissioner Jones questioned the \$35,200 coverage.

Director Cox confirmed that the funds incorporate a new fee structure.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the fee structure for well owners and new wells.

Director Cox explained that the fees apply to commercial businesses such as farms and gas stations.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the fee impact on well owners.

Director Cox confirmed that the fee structure would apply to mostly business with a sliding fee scale with no impact on citizens who rely on wells for their homes.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the FY27 approval process.

Manager Halford noted that the Board would not be approving fees.

The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN OF JAMESTOWN

Manager Halford spoke to the Town of Jamestown's engagement with the Guilford County Sheriff's Office. He explained that for receiving 24/7 enhance law enforcement coverage with five (5) dedicated Deputies is estimated at \$528,358. He noted that the Jamestown Town Council is considering \$500K in its proposed budget which leaves \$28,358 for Guilford County. He advised that we expect the town to pay for the services they receive.

Chairman Alston opined that if Jamestown agrees to pay the difference, then the County will have those funds available.

Manager Halford noted that Jamestown is conducting an estimate and the Sheriff has provided options for budget balancing. He shared that negotiations are conducted between Jamestown and the Sheriff's Office. He noted that the cost of the contract states 'the cost of five officers' and does not list a specific number. He noted that there is an estimate based per quarter per the contract.

Commissioner Perdue stated that the Town of Jamestown has contingency funds to cover the entire contract at actual cost.

FUND BALANCE

Manager Halford spoke to the different fund balances.

Chairman Alston requested for staff to speak to accusations that we are falling below the County's 8% minimum fund balance.

Manager Halford noted the Local Government Commission (LGC) and emergency access for bond funding. He explained that the State made adjustments to have four (4) months or 32% or 8% per month. He shared there was a drop in unassigned funds. He noted that peer jurisdictions are 30-35%. He shared that 8% is no longer relevant and the LGC focus is on peers.

Chairman Alston questioned any buffers to help balance the budget and how much of the \$33M was used to balance the budget.

Manager Halford confirmed that we used approximately \$29M. He noted that our challenge includes the additions of Sheriff positions, school requests, and recurring revenues.

Chairman Alston then questioned if a \$17M projection was realistic.

Manager Halford shared that using the flexibility of the bond model and using recurring funds to help reduce the use of unassigned revenue.

Commissioner Jones noted that it appears to a certain extent we are creating a self-inflicted issue, that prior to the passage of the school bonds in 2021-2022, there had never been any dollars in committed fund balance from this Board. He explained that when we discuss the unassigned dropping, we are not addressing the entirely new bucket. He noted that with those two (2) buckets in committed and unassigned are over \$200M, greater than the County has ever had in the past ten (10) years. He noted that this is an important context.

Chairman Alston confirmed that we do not show the years of committed funds.

Commissioner Tillman recalled that in an emergency, we have over \$200M at the County's disposal. He stated that a transformational bond requires financial discipline. He emphasized that the public needs to know that we are reducing our dependence on fund balance while carefully managing recurring expenses.

Chairman Alston questioned the \$8M in the MedMax fund balance during the Retreat.

Manager Halford confirmed that we are using those restricted funds more in the budget on appropriate things.

Director Beeninga noted that Medicaid Maximization funding is a restricted fund that we can use to offset expenses in our medical clinics. He noted that we have approximately \$12.1M. He noted that they have leveraged some of those funds in this year's budget with roughly \$7M to cover approved items in Public Health, leaving \$4.1M to use next year.

Chairman Alston questioned the requirements to have a fund balance and requested identifying eligible expenses.

Manager Halford noted at one time, these funds were being held for future construction and renovation of the public health facilities. He explained that these funds can be used to reimburse

expenses in areas where you use Medicaid dollars. He noted that the inflow is not as high as it used to be, as Medicaid is changing, so we do try to balance using it to fund staffing.

Chairman Alston questioned fund growth.

Manager Halford spoke to a fee schedule, to netting expenses, and to a payment structure. He shared that some netting has ceased.

Public Health Agency Business Manager Louise Baldwin confirmed expenses include dental, primary care, family planning/maternity, and communicable diseases.

Manager Halford noted that it was typically two (2) to three (3) years for the billing process that crosses fiscal years.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the \$4.4M carry over to the next year. She spoke to Medicaid uncertainty and consideration for Lee's Chapel and Gibson Park, because this is public health.

Manager Halford confirmed having to research Medicaid-eligible services.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the fund balance in consideration of Commissioner Jones' and Tillman's comments. She highlighted emergency reserve funding and reducing fund balance reliance. She stated that voters think that we are making difficult fiscal decisions in light of us sitting on a large pot of money with no purpose. She noted that while there are funds in the accounts, the purpose of those dollars is to help cover the repayment plans for the \$2B in school bonds issued.

Chairman Alston questioned if federal funding requires us to recertify twice a year instead of once, since Medicaid would have a significant financial impact to the County. He emphasized that this measure will double staffing and the federal government may defund the mandate.

Assistant County Manager Victor Isler confirmed that the Chairman is correct. He stated that in looking at the federal budget with the Big Beautiful Bill, we would need to make some modifications for recertifications twice a year. He shared that we would need to allow the State of North Carolina to interpret the policy change if passed, and then rely on the state to let us know what those expectations are. He noted that if it were mid-year, staff would come back to the Board with a proposal.

ACM Isler further explained that the perspective, as it relates to the reimbursement, is looking at 25% of reimbursements to the County, and we would need an additional twenty-five (25) to twenty-six (26) staff positions to absorb the twice-yearly recertifications. He noted that our initial review of impacts would require another 14K-15K cases that need renewal every month, up from about 7K now.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the monthly recertifications for clarification to increase to a new threshold.

ACM Isler confirmed an increase. He noted that the County trends at 7K now in certifications and this policy would double the number. He shared that in partnership with the state we can redistribute workload across twelve (12) months.

Chairman Alston noted that if it is a mandate and the reimbursement changes, it could cost the county several million dollars.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the unfunded federal mandate.

ACM Isler acknowledged DSS has pass-through dollars from the state.

Chairman Alston clarified that we would have to come up with 35% of the costs to offset 65% of state coverage in addition to more work for our employees.

ACM Isler confirmed that based on the soft projection a cost to the county at \$7M. He explained that with a projected reduction of 25%, it would be a loss of \$7M for staffing costs with a recalculation of personnel costs in the future.

Chairman Alston reiterated that there are mandates we must take into consideration.

Commissioner Cashion questioned emergency preparedness funding and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) challenges. She expressed caution in using fund balance since we owe it to our public to maintain financial security. She noted that if there is a catastrophic event without FEMA intervention, then we must be cautious using the fund balance.

Commissioner Tillman commented on FEMA and noted that it was never designed for an immediate response. He noted that he believed that those funding dollars should be passed down to the states for local management of disasters as there is a lot of evidence shared that this would be better managed at the state level.

Manager Halford continued the presentation and noted American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investment earnings of \$9.9M to include (1) \$2.3M for Rural Fire, (2) \$2.442M for Cybersecurity, and (3) \$0.575M for Continuum of Care (CoC) positions that creates a balance of \$4.5M in unrestricted funds that have been included in the FY25 recommended budget.

Manager Halford spoke to the Honor School Capital from FY23 through FY26 which consists of investment earnings from the Bond funds. He noted that these are unrestricted general county funds. He noted that we have roughly \$1.5M in allocated earnings and that at the end of FY 2025, they anticipate the balance being \$2.3M. He noted that we had initially discussed this potential revenue stream for Board consideration. He noted that the interest coming out of this could be used for anything, as these funds are not counted in the bond model and offer a potential revenue stream.

Commissioner Jones noted that in our budget from last year we showed \$167M, and this year it is the same for the cumulative surplus. He shared that there is a delta between the \$153M and \$167M in an amount roughly equal to \$14M. He questioned whether that amount earned interest.

Manager Halford noted that we are using some of those earnings in the bond model. He noted that the model was projected to develop an additional surplus and could we use this model to take care of the first pass of capital.

Commissioner Jones noted that while we have our guiding principles, we also have a change in need and the ability to be flexible with these funds.

Commissioner Tillman noted that the \$3.89M projected at the end of FY 2026 is truly unrestricted.

Manager Halford confirmed that they are unrestricted funds, and the Honor School Capital is coming from interest earnings on property tax revenues.

Manager Halford continued the presentation by sharing the ordinance's purpose and function for the Board of Education. He noted that in this year's current ordinance, the Board approved a purpose and function budget. He noted that in the packet there is an example and would need to know before the motion on the budget if there is interest in purpose and function budgeting.

Commissioner Tillman noted that the Board of Education paid a lot for renderings and designs, which reduced economies of scale for getting schools constructed. He noted that some of the schools that we are designing and building are very elaborate. He noted that the school system burned through a lot of money on that effort, and shortened the list of priorities that the schools can address. He noted that we hoped we could be more mindful as we move forward and lean into economies of scale.

Commissioner Cooke shared that some of those concerns have been raised in the Joint School Facilities Committee meeting, and we can do a better job of reporting on those meetings. She shared a need to temper those conversations when those designs began in 2019, when we had a very different economy, when at that time we could invest in one-of-a-kind schools for Guilford County.

Commissioner Cooke recognized that our circumstances have changed, and our school partners have identified the same and are much more conscientious on costs and materials utilized. She shared that in regard to the purpose and function, and if it is our intent to direct funds to something like maintenance, it is adding more work to staff on both sides and we are not achieving the goals that we hope to achieve.

Commissioner Jones noted a fundamental misunderstanding between purpose and function. He noted that we are not able to drill down as deeply as we would like and recognize that staff is closer to the school staff as to what goes into capital and maintenance. He noted that there still seems to be a divide between elected officials and staff in regards how those funds can be used. He shared that there was a fundamental misunderstanding, implying that there was no funding in the Manager's budget for maintenance; however, those funds are identified in the operational budget. He also asked if staff could speak to how incentives work at our next Board meeting as there is some lack of clarity with the public on how incentives are offered.

Commissioner Cashion added for staff to spend more time speaking on the claw back clause discussions as an investment for contract performance.

Manager Halford spoke to FY25-26 ordinance text changes to Section 9-B and Section 10-C. He reviewed changes to the ordinance, noting that it does give authority to the Manager for certain things. He noted that the Manager can make appropriations for up to \$30K, then report to the Board at the next meeting. He noted the changes to energy, to vehicle fuel, and to utilities. He

noted that between insurance accounts, we can move up to any amount so long as we do not go over the total budgeted amounts for those line items.

Manager Halford noted that in Section 9-B regarding the “transfer moneys from one appropriation to another” language, the Manager can move up to \$30K from one department to another and then report out to the Board. He discussed language pertaining to “insurance salaries, benefits, energy, technology, and facility expense” and the movement of allocated funds up to \$30K.

Manager Halford noted that in Section 10-C regarding the “contracts, amendments, or change orders” language, in addition to subpart (f) regarding the “aggregate of the amendment requires less than a \$200K increase”. He described a situation involving a \$90K service contract that is amended to over \$200K, staff must have Board approval. He explained that the amended ordinance would allow managerial authority to execute such contracts without Board approval, which was the ordinance’s original intent. He shared that this amendment closes a historical loophole.

Chairman Alston questioned if Board action needed to be taken tonight.

County Attorney Andrea Leslie-Fite advised that this is a preview and that the actual motion will be provided with the budget adoption.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Alston requested presentations regarding other business items for this agenda.

A. GUILFORD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Commissioner Cooke requested that the Board consider Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) President Dr. Anthony Clarke’s full budget increase of \$300K as we do have \$1.5M available.

Moved by Commissioner Carly Cooke, seconded by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, to direct staff to add to the FY25-26 Recommended Budget motion for the June 18th Board Meeting, an increase of \$300K in the GTCC operating budget using the identified revenue funds.

Commissioner Murphy voiced support and suggested that the slight increase is reasonable. She noted that while Commissioner Gray-Hill could not be present, he shared his support as well.

Commissioner Cashion expressed support for GTCC and recalled the BOOM tour and the decision to select Guilford County and its offerings.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Commissioner Jones recognized Captain Wes Mecham to present on the Real-Time Crime Center.

Captain Mecham shared that it is a component of real-time intelligence. He explained that the subscriptions bring into the scope the intelligence side of the center. He noted that we did budget for the camera live streams, but this will allow us to quickly reach out to other agencies to speed up investigations. He noted that surrounding area agencies are already using these tools.

Captain Mecham noted that one of the programs is called CLEAR, a biometric identity verification system, that brings together all this information quickly in real time. He explained that available live-stream camera resources allow communication from other agencies to speed up investigations.

Commissioner Jones highlighted the Re-entry Program funding and function and questioned how many are helped annually.

Captain Mecham confirmed that thousands of people are assisted when they leave prison. He noted that \$150K of grant funds were fully utilized. He shared that the Sheriff's Office must have \$75K from our budget to assist with hotel rooms, transportation, and basic needs (e.g., toiletries and food) during this transition phase.

Commissioner Jones spoke in support of the Real-Time Crime Center and Re-entry Program to decrease recidivism rates. He emphasized a holistic approach to community assistance.

Moved by Commissioner Frankie T. Jones, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, to direct staff to add to the FY25-26 Recommended Budget motion for the June 18th Board Meeting, an additional \$75K for the Re-entry Program and \$32,500 for the Real-Time Crime Center software subscriptions for a total of \$107,500 for the Guilford County Sheriff's Office.

Vice Chairwoman Foster questioned the Re-entry Program staffing.

Captain Mecham confirmed Supervisor Dr. Lakisha Ellison and two full-time employees (FTEs) plus a new Re-entry Program Manager was just hired two (2) weeks ago.

Vice Chairwoman Foster questioned success metrics with half of the grant dollars.

Captain Mecham confirmed that we are talking about human beings and their lives. He spoke to the thousands of justice-involved individuals who have been helped through this program.

Vice Chairwoman Foster questioned if they would be able to reapply for grant funds next year.

Captain Mecham confirmed and shared that they would be able to reapply for the grant as these funds would help the Sheriff's Office bridge the gap right now.

Vice Chairwoman Foster acknowledged speaking with High Point Police Chief Curtis Cheeks and their use of the Real-Time Crime Center. She noted the center's effectiveness and its staff of three (3).

Captain Mecham confirmed the current staffing model in addition to future personnel of three (3) to four (4) individuals.

Vice Chairwoman Foster noted the business collaborations that allow the Sheriff's Office access to their cameras.

Captain Mecham confirmed a similar program was in use.

Commissioner Cashion expressed support for these endeavors as opportunities to intervene during these transitions. She shared that she has been a part of the Re-entry and Second Chance Act for these programs as these are great opportunities to intervene at the point of transition. **She requested a current report on the Re-entry Program.**

Captain Mecham confirmed and spoke to the Jail Diversion Program.

The motion carried unanimously.

C. RURAL FIRE DISTRICTS

Chairman Alston recognized Commissioner Perdue.

Moved by Commissioner Alan Perdue, seconded by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, to direct the County Manager to remove from the FY25-26 Recommended Budget motion for the June 18th Board Meeting, the allocation of cost for the 911 Center and radio maintenance to the Fire Districts and instead fund the cost of these items from the General Fund in the amount of \$568,160. The Manager is authorized to adjust the proposed service district rates to satisfy the removal of those additional costs.

Director Beeninga explained that with this action, there will be a remaining \$509,088.

Chairman Alston questioned the twenty-four (24) requested positions.

EMS Director Jim Albright shared that the staggered hiring is not affected.

Commissioner Cooke expressed support for this motion as they have been in communication with the rural Fire Chiefs to continue funding their programming.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Perdue noted the purpose and funding for the Guilford County Schools (GCS) budget. He recommended that the Board issue a Statement of Intent separate and apart from the budget ordinance so that the public knows where this Board is committed to solving some of those programs.

Chairman Alston consulted with the County Manager and County Attorney regarding the purpose and function.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite noted that anything else is non-binding.

Commissioner Perdue confirmed that these will be presented on Wednesday during the Board meeting.

D. COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOs)

Chairman Alston shared the CBO list for future review. He noted a \$1.7M allotment. He shared his intent to allot these funds into the budget and then issue allocations in July instead of fast-tracking.

Moved by Commissioner Frankie T. Jones, Jr., seconded by Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster, to direct staff to add to the FY25-26 Recommended Budget motion for the June 18th Board Meeting, the \$1.74M for Community-Based Organizations to be allotted during the July 17, 2025 Board Meeting.

Commissioner Tillman voiced opposition to the motion due to the process.

Commissioner Jones thanked staff for reviewing all 190 applications and providing a format to receive objective information in addition to the quarterly reporting requirement.

VOTE: Motion carried 7 - 0

AYES: Melvin "Skip" Alston, J. Carlvena Foster, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Kay Cashion, Carly Cooke, Mary Beth Murphy, Brandon Gray-Hill

NOES: Pat Tillman and Alan Perdue

The motion carried.

Chairman Alston directed the Clerk's Office to distribute the conflict-of-interest list for the CBOs, noting that the Board cannot advocate for any of those items.

E. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Legislative Services Position

Commissioner Cooke recapped her visit to the nation's capital with the Guilford delegation as a result of the legislative agenda. She stated that it became clear that there are so many moving pieces during the long session and we are not staffed to be able to keep up with it. She shared that we do not have anyone designated on staff and proposed an allocation of \$100K to hire an outside firm or discuss an internal staff to assist with ongoing state and federal legislation. She emphasized that some of the items are not necessarily for Guilford County budgeting, but funding advocacy for GTCC, Guilford County Schools, and local colleges/universities, to name a few.

Chairman Alston noted that he would concur with the need for a lobbyist. He hoped that we would work through our County Attorney's Office to better advise us in selections. He

emphasized that a lobbyist would be directed by the County Attorney regarding specialization of roles and purpose, along with North Carolina General Assembly expertise.

Moved by Commissioner Carly Cooke, seconded by Commissioner Pat Tillman, to direct staff to add to the FY25-26 Recommended Budget motion for the June 18th Board Meeting, a Lobbyist position in the amount of \$100K.

Commissioner Jones sought lobbyist clarification.

Commissioner Cooke confirmed a need for both state and federal, with a priority for state.

Commissioner Jones further questioned the lobbyist's placement in the organizational structure.

Commissioner Cooke confirmed the County Attorney's Office.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite made a point of clarification regarding lobbying efforts and the educational components that would encompass Legislative Services.

Commissioner Cooke accepted the friendly amendment and confirmed a line item for Legislative Services.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite advised that this designation will assist with additional services.

Commissioner Tillman expressed a need to have someone with leverage with those in Raleigh since GCS and the cities have lobbyists.

Chairman Alston urged consideration for a partnership with GTCC for advocacy efforts.

Commissioner Cooke shared that we can work out the details, but County initiatives would be primary, as we have mandated services.

Chairman Alston clarified that some firms have teams of lobbyists instead of hiring one (1) individual who may not have cross-knowledge. He explained that our Attorney can come back with recommendations.

Moved by Commissioner Carly Cooke, seconded by Commissioner Pat Tillman, to direct staff to add to the FY25-26 Recommended Budget motion for the June 18th Board Meeting, a Legislative Services position in the amount of \$100K.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. TEAM Project Eviction Remediation

Commissioner Murphy noted continued funding of the TEAM Project for eviction remediation to curb homelessness, which is an ARPA-funded program up until the end of this fiscal year. She noted that the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) Program Coordinator Renée Norris highlighted \$417,912 for the current service level. She recommended using ARPA-invested earnings up until the end of the current fiscal year with unallocated unrestricted funds.

Moved by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Carly Cooke, to direct staff to add to the FY25-26 Recommended Budget motion for the June 18th Board Meeting, to appropriate unrestricted and unallocated ARPA-investment earnings of \$417,912 to continue TEAM project funding until the end of FY26.

Chairman Alston questioned ARPA fund utilization.

Commissioner Murphy noted that the funding sources are the current funding sources. She noted that there is an opportunity in the next fiscal year to move them to a fiscal year contract next year. She urged the Board to consider a contract next year using County funds.

Commissioner Tillman spoke to the TEAM program remediation protocols.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the use of ARPA funds due to the two (2) future installations – Lee’s Chapel and the Women and Children’s Center.

ACM Isler confirmed that ARPA-invested earnings are \$3.5M identified for Gibson Park which is currently in a design phase. He shared a soft projection of \$8-9M for full renovation. He noted coming before the Board again for project clarification.

Manager Halford confirmed ARPA-enabled funds cover the \$3.5M.

Vice Chairwoman Foster questioned whether High Point and Greensboro are allocating funding into their budgets.

Commissioner Murphy confirmed there is joint funding for this project, and to continue the County’s funding level for two (2) days of eviction mediation at each courthouse.

Commissioner Cashion recommended another funding source.

Manager Halford noted that we have \$409K left from anticipated revenues.

Chairman Alston opined that all ARPA funds were transferred to operations.

Manager Halford confirmed that there is a difference between ARPA-enabled and a few true ARPA funds. He shared that current federal contracts will be spent down and any remaining funds can be moved.

Chairman Alston confirmed using ARPA investment funds since they are unrestricted.

Commissioner Cooke noted that one thing to consider for the source of funds – the \$1.5M is recurring revenue. She shared that the TEAM Program is a pilot program and we have not officially done an evaluation of this program. She explained that if we move it into our recurring revenues, we should evaluate it more regularly and differently as a one-time pilot program.

Commissioner Perdue left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Chairman Alston stated that we can do one or the other and make adjustments later.

Commissioner Cooke expressed no intent to make this recurring.

Chairman Alston noted that we will need recurring funds to handle evictions and the homeless crisis.

Commissioner Murphy made a friendly amendment to use \$409,088 of recurring revenues, with approximately an \$8K difference from ARPA-investment earnings.

Commissioner Cooke accepted the friendly amendment.

Moved by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Carly Cooke, to direct staff to add to the FY25-26 Recommended Budget motion for the June 18th Board Meeting, to appropriate \$409,088 of recurring revenues, along with \$8,824 from ARPA-investment earnings to total \$417,912 to continue TEAM project funding until the end of FY26.

The motion carried unanimously.

3. Guilford County Schools Classified Employees

Commissioner Murphy urged the Board to consider \$8M to address the GCS staff crisis for classified employees.

Chairman Alston reiterated that the County is allocating \$280M to GCS and that the Board of Education (BoE) can address staffing concerns.

Commissioner Murphy noted that there is some flexibility in their bond model to help GCS meet its legislative mandates.

Chairman Alston noted that in all due respect, the County is funding \$280M and anything more than that would be a recurring cost.

Commissioner Jones sought the County Manager's recommendation regarding the \$8M.

Manager Halford shared the bond model and Honor School Capital interest per Board direction.

Commissioner Cashion expressed caution as to the ongoing request; if approved, there will be a need for more funding next year.

Chairman Alston stated that this equates to \$10M recurring next year.

Commissioner Cooke noted using the interest earnings of \$3.9M of Honor School Capital towards the GCS increase. She questioned the legislative mandates, and legislative salary increases to the schools, with a total of \$3.3M. She questioned if there was any consideration to address that when the state budget passes. She questioned if the Board would be interested in funding classified workers with the adoption of the budget but hold consideration for legislative salary increases for teachers.

Chairman Alston explained that this would be an actual, fixed expense.

Commissioner Cooke explained that \$3.1M would bring the match to \$10.5M for locally funded positions to cover classified staff.

Commissioner Jones clarified that the benefits are predicated on salary increases. He noted that all the GCS items included all positions and retirement and we would have to fund all of it.

Commissioner Cooke identified some capacity in the model to bring teachers up to livable wages and create a balance.

Chairman Alston reiterated that the BoE should take the same initiative and responsibility and prioritize staff.

Commissioner Murphy highlighted conversations with GCS Superintendent Dr. Whitney Oakley, who spoke to their hands being tied where other school systems can advocate for a tax base. She emphasized that our teachers must rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and we need to stabilize wages.

Commissioner Tillman recalled a \$3.6M request for GCS safety and security in addition to the previous \$15M GCS allocation two (2) years ago.

Chairman Alston expressed GCS support but reiterated that we must be behind our County employees as they are not receiving raises. He noted that Guilford County is not having a tax increase per our direction. He shared that the BoE has some responsibility to prioritize teacher and classified workers, given that the County is giving 46% of the budget and is forced to run the rest of the county with the remainder. He stated a belief that the BoE can prioritize \$3.2M of the \$280M that the County provides to them for operational needs.

Commissioner Cooke noted that we added ninety-two (92) positions and allotted 3% merit increases and pay-plan maintenance.

Chairman Alston emphasized that we have not come close to funding county position needs for Sheriff, EMS, and DSS, plus the need to hire additional staff for Medicaid changes for re-certification.

Commissioner Tillman noted that the GCS Principals and Assistant Principals have been paid well in addition to bonuses for well-performing schools. He stated that it is time to look internally at the GCS budget and look at some cost savings at the main office, as there is wiggle room for the GCS to prioritize teacher pay. He shared that they must make hard staff funding decisions.

IV. ADJOURN

Motion was made by Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster, and seconded by Commissioner Kay Cashion, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: Motion carried 7 - 0
AYES: Melvin "Skip" Alston, J. Carlvena Foster, Pat Tillman, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Kay Cashion, Carly Cooke, Mary Beth Murphy
NOES: None

There being no further business, the work session adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chairman

Robin Keller
Clerk