



GUILFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' RETREAT

March 20, 2025
High Point University
Congdon School of Health Sciences
Anne Kerr Walker Ballroom
One North University Parkway, High Point, NC 27260

DAY 1

8:30 AM

Breakfast

9:00 AM

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Melvin "Skip" Alston and Margaret Henderson, UNC School of Government

9:15 AM

THE BASICS ABOUT WICKED PROBLEMS

UNC School of Government

Professor of Public Administration and Government, Dr. Maureen M. Berner

10:15 AM

Break

10:30 AM

Q&A Session

UNC School of Government

Professors Berner and Henderson

How does this information inform local efforts to address wicked problems?

- What is the range of involvement, from obstruction to support?
- What are the roles elected officials might play?
- How do these actions and factors differ between linear problems and wicked problems?

11:00 AM

SMALL TABLE DISCUSSIONS

- What factors determine whether local government get involved in addressing a wicked problem?
- Generate a comprehensive list.
- Which factors are most important?

12:00 PM **Lunch**

12:30 PM **STARTING AND SUSTAINING THE WORK**

UNC School of Government

Professor of Public Administration and Government, Dr. Maureen M. Berner

Each table is assigned a question to discuss and report out.

1. Degree of participation: How inclusive should the effort be? Under what circumstances should that involvement change during the phases of work?
2. Setting goals: If wicked problems are relentless, how should “success” or “progress” be defined?
3. Managing the work: What will it take to make the work happen? How do we identify and address our limitations? How do we stay aligned?
4. Managing reality: How do we best balance the work efforts with our limited resources and ongoing community change?

1:45 PM **GROUP DISCUSSION**

UNC School of Government

Professor of Public Administration and Government, Dr. Maureen M. Berner

2:00 PM **Break**

2:15 PM **DISCUSSION**

UNC School of Government

Professor of Public Administration and Government, Dr. Maureen M. Berner

How do we make peace with or alleviate the frustrations of working on wicked problems?

- How are things working for you now?
- What roles, processes, values, or actions could be strengthened?
- How should you define or manage realistic limitations?

3:45 PM **NEXT STEPS & SELF-EVALUATION**

UNC School of Government

Professor of Public Administration and Government, Dr. Maureen M. Berner

FINAL REMARKS

Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston

4:00 PM **RECESS**