

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

Greensboro, North Carolina
February 5, 2026

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed Work Session at 4:00 p.m. in the 3rd Floor of the City of High Point Municipal Building, Council Chambers, 211 South Hamilton Street, High Point, NC.

PRESENT: Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston; Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster, presiding; Commissioners Kay Cashion, Brandon Gray-Hill, Carly Cooke, Mary Beth Murphy, Frankie T. Jones Jr., Pat Tillman, and Alan Perdue.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Victor Isler; Deputy County Manager Toy Beeninga; County Attorney Carolyn Thompson; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; Chief Deputy Clerk to the Board Ariane Webb; Deputy Clerk to the Board T’ebony Rosa; Assistant County Manager Erris Dunston; Assistant County Manager Natalie Craver; 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

Vice Chairwoman Foster welcomed those present and called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m. She noted a change to the work session agenda to remove Item D. FY27 Budget Areas.

Motion made by Commissioner Carly Cooke, seconded by Commissioner Frankie T. Jones Jr., to remove Item D. FY27 Budget Areas from the work session agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chairwoman Foster recognized County Manager Victor Isler, who introduced the first agenda item.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. TRANSCO PIPELINE UPDATE

Assistant County Manager (ACM) Erris Dunston recognized Williams Company Community and Public Outreach, Michael Atchie, and Program Manager Tyler Duvall.

Atchie began his presentation by providing an update on the Southeast Supply Enhancement project and permitting milestones. He gave an overview of the nationwide historical footprint, major assets, natural gas demand and supply needs, and noted that the Williams Company has operated for over 75 years throughout its corridor.

Atchie highlighted the operations team, the millions in dollars of community engagement investment, and its safety commitment. He spoke to a public awareness program, to the 8-1-1 Call Before You Dig program, and to an emergency response system. He shared drone monitoring protocols and frequent assessments of its infrastructure to include a protective pipe sealant coating to maintain pipeline integrity, X-rays, and strength testing.

Atchie noted the Transco pipeline expansion and modernization proposed project in the Southeast United States, which will transfer an estimated 1.6 dekatherms per day. He noted the economic impact, job creation, and an estimated \$400K in tax revenue. He displayed an illustrative diagram of the project map and outlined the scope of work to include upgrades to the compressor stations. He shared that approximately 5.9 miles of pipe installation in Guilford County and spoke to ongoing dialogue with Parks and Recreation directors in the Triad Park location.

Commissioner Cashion referred to slide 5 (Williams Safety Commitment) and questioned safety features, operations, and the frequency of well x-rays.

Atchie confirmed welding segments of the pipes together and x-raying each well before pipe installation. He explained that once installed underground, they have monitoring efforts to gauge energy flow. He spoke to pipe integrity gauges (a.k.a. “pigs”) that are run through the line for inspection purposes. He shared that we are meeting and exceeding our competitors on regulatory compliance and that safety is the highest priority.

Commissioner Tillman questioned the lines running parallel, and not on top, and the aging impacts. He further questioned the philanthropy efforts within Guilford County.

Atchie confirmed that the pipes are adjacent to each other, approximately 25 feet separation distance from each other. He shared that safe excavation and repair do not impact other lines. He noted that he will provide philanthropy data, which is mostly allocated to first responders.

Commissioner Murphey questioned the timeline and project duration, particularly in Triad Park and the impacted neighborhoods.

Duval confirmed starting the first week of March, pending further authorization. He noted that the North Carolina/Virginia section starts by November.

Commissioner Murphey questioned the immediate engagement of increased capacity.

Atchie confirmed that their customers drive the capacity need. He noted that the federal regulatory process started in 2023, and they achieved permitting milestones with the Department

of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and received Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) certification.

Commissioner Perdue sought clarification regarding ongoing training and education programs.

Williams Company Operations, Joey Page, confirmed donations to all fire districts and meeting regularly with stakeholders to present current operations and how to mitigate any risks. He noted communications with all the small towns in Guilford County on fire prevention techniques.

Commissioner Cooke questioned county compressor station locations and community engagement consistency.

Page confirmed no such stations in Guilford County.

Atchie confirmed speaking to easement owners, electeds, and stakeholder groups back in 2023 prior to the project commencement.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the contact information for interested parties.

Atchie confirmed an outreach email and a 1-800 hotline number.

ACM Dunston thanked the Williams Company and continued the presentation with Deputy County Attorney Tina Flowers and Deputy County Manager Toy Beeninga. She noted the requested easement, Triad Park impacts, associated compensation, and highlighted the timeline.

Attorney Flowers covered the FERC environmental assessment and construction expectations, North Carolina DEQ and Virginia DEQ requirements, and FERC certificate conditions as recommended.

Commissioner Jones encouraged staff to focus on summarizing and highlighting the most important updates on this topic for board awareness due to time constraints.

Attorney Flowers concluded the presentation by noting the Natural Gas Act.

County Manager Isler summarized the presentation by speaking to agreement alignment around the easement that will be necessary for the pipeline through a portion of County's jointly owned property located at Triad Park with the Williams Company and Forsyth County. He noted that the easement agreement will be forth coming to the board later this month.

Vice Chairwoman Foster sought clarification regarding compensation.

County Manager Isler confirmed that the rate is based on linear pipe footage and acreage and is split 50/50 between Guilford and Forsyth counties. He noted further Board decision regarding options for allocating \$50K in easement compensation could be decided at a later date, and spoke to potential allocations to Triad Park maintenance considerations, and to safe, clean practices.

B. COUNTY DEBT LEVELING PLAN

Deputy County Manager (DCM) Beeninga introduced this agenda item by explaining the debt leveling proposed work session calendar. He reviewed the objectives to include (1) Continue the planned FY2026 adopted model, (2) Reduce the FY2026 adopted model, and (3) Establish a consistent dedicated tax rate. He reflected on the initial plan and noted the \$15M of additional capital until 2035 into GCS. He explained that selling the next tranche is timed as funds are depleted and spent down, which creates additional capacity in FY26 budget to support the general fund.

DCM Beeninga explained the debt repayment plan, cash flows, and policy considerations to include (1) Creating model options that fully fund the \$2M bond program, (2) Recognizing assumptions have changed since the model was originally developed, and revenues can be optimized, (3) Risk tolerance to cash flow and county's ability to float, and (4) Awareness of other funding considerations, including strategic priorities and revenue optimization/stewardship.

DCM Beeninga spoke to Options 1, 2, and 3 for Board consideration.

DCM Beeninga shared **Option 1 (FY26 Adopted)**, which requires an additional \$46.2M in recurring revenue with growth at 2% per year. He outlined the pros to encompass that debt issuances can be pulled forward to issue within a 7-year Local Government Commission (LGC) window, without additional revenues, and it could buy down future debt issuances or provide flexibility to develop an allocation plan for the additional capacity. He outlined the cons to encompass setting aside more revenue now that is needed to repay \$2B bond program.

DCM Beeninga shared that cash flows are important, along with a monthly GCS review. He noted that we never crested above \$15M capital. He explained the debt model diagram by noting that switching to a pay-go model would be possible starting in FY45, which would fund about one school per year, assuming no additional bond issuances. He noted that Option 1 would support maintaining the County's fund balance position above the target of 30% through FY36.

DCM Beeninga shared **Option 2 (Reduced FY26 Adopted)**, which requires an additional \$34M in recurring revenue with growth at 2% per year. He outlined the pros to encompass enhancing flexibility to address other strategic priorities and revenue optimization/stewardship by reducing the new revenue needed by \$12.2M. He explained that this option does not provide flexibility to pull forward bond issuance, potentially causing the County to float.

DCM Beeninga shared that spending above \$15M for an extended period requires Board approval regarding funding the model. He explained the debt model diagram by noting that switching to a pay-go model would be possible starting in FY46, which would fund about one school per year, assuming no additional bond issuances. He noted that Option 2 results in a quicker spend down of the County's committed fund balance, resulting in total fund balance falling below 30% in FY35.

DCM Beeninga shared **Option 3 (FY27 Revised)**, which establishes a dedicated property tax rate of 7.10 cents moving forward, requiring an additional \$22.3M in recurring revenue. He outlined the pros to encompass enhancing flexibility to address other strategic priorities and

revenue optimization/stewardship by reducing new revenue needed by \$23.9M and creating a clear communication around 7.1 cents of the property tax being dedicated to school debt service. He shared that this option commits future budget revenue growth based on the value of a cent increasing, but the number of cents remains consistent.

DCM Beeninga explained that the numbers remain consistent in this model based on how the value of the cent increases, but the Board cannot go revenue neutral. He explained the debt model diagram by noting that switching to a pay-go model would be possible starting in FY44, which would fund about one school per year, assuming no additional bond issuances. He further explained that the dedicated tax rate would hold consistent, resulting in additional revenue of \$19M in investment in FY32. He noted that Option 3 results in a quicker spend down of the current committed fund balance, resulting in the total fund balance falling below 30% one year sooner than Option 2.

DCM Beeninga noted the LCG requirements and forecasted issuing a tranche every two years, and having two \$300M referendums in 2033 and 2037 for the GCS to spend against. He opined \$150M to support rebuilds of approximately five schools every three years.

DCM Beeninga opened the floor for questions regarding the requested Board direction for (1) Option 1 – Continuing the funding plan as adopted with the FY26 budget and add \$46.2M in recurring property tax revenue to the FY27 budget; (2) Option 2 – Revising the funding plan and add \$34M in recurring property tax revenue to the FY27 budget; and (3) Option 3 – Dedicating 7.10 cents of property tax revenue to the funding plan and add \$22.3M in recurring property tax revenue to the FY27 budget.

Commissioner Perdue sought clarification for the root cause in the jump in valuation and scope of projects.

DCM Beeninga confirmed the natural sequencing process of the GCS construction projects, considering advancing additional project ordinances as peaks come when the next tranche of schools are completed, while some are starting.

Commissioner Perdue clarified a review of the model for the design build.

DCM Beeninga confirmed that, as fund balance allows us to float, there is flexibility for a number of months even with variations.

Commissioner Tillman referred to the \$15M common variable and questioned the management and oversight of construction costs.

DCM Beeninga confirmed the Board of Education's dial for authorized spending and timing of bond releases. He shared a need for LCG approval for the last tranche due to the 7-year window consideration and future encumbrances. He stated that \$15M is a nice balance based on the market.

Commissioner Tillman thanked staff for creative thinking efforts and providing policy leverage on the revenue-neutral choice. He questioned interest earnings in Option 2 for the fund balance.

DCM Beeninga confirmed interest earnings on Honor School Capital set asides.

Commissioner Cooke requested further insight into line items and voiced support for Option 2, considering the taxpayer burden. She stated not wanting to be bound to a tax-rate decision in Option 3 in light of recent emergencies.

Commissioner Jones voiced support for Option 2. He questioned interest-earning projections.

DCM Beeninga confirmed \$14M in investments and setting the calculations to the number of IRS earnings due to arbitrage. He requested future Board discussion.

Commissioner Murphy echoed Commissioner Cooke's comments and voiced support for Option 2 for fiscal responsibility. She emphasized not being policy-decision bound, considering deferred maintenance impacts.

Commissioner Cooke shared her support of the board directing County Manager Isler to move forward with Option 2 with an option to adjust based on staff and community feedback.

County Manager Isler expressed appreciation to the Board for their support, for being forward thinking, and working through the GCS capital plan.

Chairman Alston voiced support for Option 2, considering receipt of additional information from staff and the public feedback from community meetings.

Commissioner Cashion voiced support for Option 2, considering all the projects we have on the table.

Foster shared for the record that there was board consensus to direct the manager to move forward in using Option 2 as he works to prepare his proposed budget. Foster noted that the Manger's recommended budget is a starting point for the Board to deliberate on, and that if the board wanted to make further adjustments before final adoption of the budget the board could due so at that time.

C. ADVANCING OUR LIVABILITY STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

DCM Beeninga introduced the agenda item and noted a continuation of information from the recent Budget Retreat, with updated goal areas based on Commissioner feedback.

DCM Beeninga provided an overview of the strategies that align with each of the five goal areas, in addition to the public feedback that shapes them.

DCM Beeninga described the livability pop-up events and qualitative data gathering methods and noted the structure of the budget and livability forums.

DCM Beeninga concluded the presentation by displaying a district map depicting the quadrant-based outreach approach with geographical spread.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business on this agenda.

IV. ADJOURN

Motion made by Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster, seconded by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, to adjourn the work session.

The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the work session adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chairman

Robin Keller
Clerk