

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

Greensboro, North Carolina
March 29, 2022

The Guilford County Board of Commissioners met in a duly noticed Virtual Work Session at 6:00PM using the web-based virtual platform, Zoom.

PRESENT: Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston, presiding; Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster; Commissioners Kay Cashion, Alan Perdue, Carly Cooke, Justin Conrad, Mary Beth Murphy, Frankie T. Jones Jr., and James Upchurch.

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Michael Halford; Interim County Attorney Matthew Mason; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; Assistant County Manager Jason Jones; Deputy Clerk Ariane Webb; Deputy Clerk Jessica Wolf; Communications Manager Worley Smith; various members of County staff and media. Virtual participation was made available to the general public and the media.

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston welcomed those present and called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

II. NEW BUSINESS

**A. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH NORTHSTATE
COMMUNICATIONS - NC GREAT GRANT FOR BROADBAND
EXPANSION IN GUILFORD COUNTY**

Assistant County Manager Jason Jones spoke to the agenda item. NorthState Communications is interested in applying for the NC Department of Information Technology's Broadband Infrastructure Office administers the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) program. The funding for this grant will be contingent on NorthState Communications successfully receiving the GREAT grant award.

Jones introduced Derek Kelly and Joey Stephenson with NorthState Communications. Kelly spoke to the project in detail and reviewed the broadband expansion area.

Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy stated she was very excited to hear about this project and that this project aligns with the Board's priorities addressing gaps in broadband coverage in our area.

Motion made by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy and seconded by Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster to approve an allocation of \$50,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding towards NorthState Communications' NC Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) grant application, contingent upon NorthState being awarded this funding by the NC Department of Information Technology's Broadband Infrastructure Office. Authorize staff to execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining this agreement to be submitted by NorthState with their grant application, along with a formal letter of support for their application from the Guilford County Board of Commissioners and any budget amendments, if deemed necessary.

VOTE: Motion carried 9 - 0

**AYES: Mary Beth Murphy, Kay Cashion, Carly Cooke, James Upchurch, J. Carlvena Foster, Alan Perdue, Justin Conrad, Frankie T. Jones Jr.,
Melvin "Skip" Alston**

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

Chairman Alston left the meeting at 6:08PM

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. GRANT REQUEST - INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER & MUSEUM

Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster introduced the agenda item.

County Manager Michael Halford spoke to the request from the International Civil Rights Center & Museum (ICRCM). The request totals \$2 million with an immediate allocation of \$1 million and additional grant funding of \$200,000 per year for the next five years.

Commissioner Kay Cashion asked ICRCM CEO John Swaine that she was under the impression that they would have \$5 million to close with.

Swaine stated they have been meeting with numerous people over the last year and have been waiting on responses from organizations. He stated they will have around \$2.5 million to close by March 31.

Commissioner Cashion asked if their projected revenue can support the interest payments along with their regular operating expenses.

Swaine stated they will be able to support these expenses.

Commissioner Cashion referenced the balloon payment after 5 years and asked if they would be able to support this cost.

Swaine noted he has been aligning staff to support the museum's operations as well as future fundraising efforts. He stated he has seen significant interest in the museum and the products and services being offered. Swaine noted to the local support and enthusiasm for the museum.

Commissioner Cashion thanked Swaine for being here and will be supporting this ask.

Commissioner Justin Conrad asked Interim County Attorney Matt Mason for clarification on the County's clawback ability in the contract.

Mason stated if the museum failed to begin using the new building for this purpose within 8 years, the clawback provision stops any future payments that haven't been made and obligates the museum to payback any payments that have been made. The county could decide to not demand repayment if they decided those dollars were being used for museum purposes.

Commissioner Conrad noted to the contract and questioned if the Board in the future could waive re-payment.

Mason stated there are some conditions with these funds and the waiver has a pre-requisite that requires these funds be used for a legally permissible reason.

Commissioner Cooke asked if Mason could give a brief overview of the contract.

Halford noted the contract submitted by staff this morning is the contract staff recommends.

Mason noted that later in the day the museum submitted additional requests that have been shared with the Board.

Swaine shared that they felt some of the adjustments proposed were minor and dealing with the purchase of the property next door. He spoke to the work to their National Historic Landmark status and UNESCO inscription. Swaine also spoke to N.C.G.S. 160A-488.

Swaine shared their intent to work with the tenants in the building as well as consultants and architects. He shared that as they continue in this process, they will have a better understanding what the limitations will be with the UNESCO inscription and the historic landmark. He spoke in support of a Commissioner Liaison appointed to the Board. Swaine noted that they do not support public board meetings due to the confidentiality and sensitivity of donors at their request. Swaine also spoke to the County's template conflict of interest policy to be used.

Commissioner Upchurch stated that he personally thinks the ICRCM is an asset to the community and hopes that they achieve everything they are trying to do, but he does not believe tax payers should pay for this request.

Commissioner Perdue stated he appreciates the museum and wishes them well in their future endeavors but will also be voting against the motion.

Commissioner Foster spoke to the historical significance of the museum and what it means to our county. She noted this museum is significant and gives our county national recognition.

Motion made by Commissioner Frankie T. Jones Jr. and seconded by Commissioner Kay Cashion to approve contract and associated budget amendment, in substantial form, with the International Civil Rights Center & Museum for a \$1,000,000 community-based organization grant in FY 2021-22, with the remaining \$1,000,000 in funds to paid in future budget allocations as outlined in the terms of the contract. Upon approval, direct staff to take any and all necessary actions to execute the grant agreement.

VOTE: Motion carried 5 - 3
AYES: Kay Cashion, Carly Cooke, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., J. Carlvena Foster, Mary Beth Murphy
NOES: James Upchurch, Justin Conrad, Alan Perdue
ABSENT: Melvin "Skip" Alston

Vice Chair Foster thanked Mr. Swaine and Dr. Harris for their work on this project.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business discussed.

V. ADJOURN

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 6:35PM.

Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chairman

Robin Keller
Clerk to Board