MINUTES OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

OF GUILFORD COUNTY

WORK SESSION

Greensboro, North Carolina June 9, 2016

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed Work Session at 1:00 PM in the Blue Room of the Old County Courthouse, 301 West Market Street, Greensboro NC.

PRESENT: Chairman Jeff Phillips, presiding; Vice Chairman Alan Branson;

Commissioners Justin Conrad; Kay Cashion; Alan Perdue and

Hank Henning.

ABSENT: Commissioners Carolyn Q. Coleman; Ray Trapp and J. Carlvena Foster.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Marty Lawing; County Attorney Mark Payne; Deputy

County Manager Clarence Grier; Robin Keller, Clerk to Board; Michael Halford, Budget Director; Reid Baker, Finance Director; Catherine Johnson, Family Justice Center Director; Jim Albright, Emergency

Services Director; Merle Green, DHHS-Public Health Division Director; Colonel Randy Powers, Sheriff's Office; Jeff Fowler, Security Director; Myra Thompson, DHHS-DSS Administrative Services Division Director; Elizabeth White, DHHS-DSS Economic Services Division Director;

members of the community and media.

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Phillips welcomed those present and called the meeting to order at 1:00PM.

County Manager Marty Lawing shared that the meeting would proceed from the June 8, 2016 agenda.

II. NEW BUSINESS

G. EDUCATION FOCUS AREA

1. Guilford County Schools

Nora Carr, Interim Co-Superintendent for Guilford County Schools (GCS), introduced GCS staff present at the work session. She shared that school system is the largest employer in Guilford County, with over 9,000 employees and reviewed the array of positions.

Carr stated GCS enrollment has increased since 2008, despite decreases in staff, and noted the system has cut approximately they have cut approximately 400 positions through attrition over the years. Carr confirmed GCS is composed of 127 schools.

Carr discussed the fiscal review conducted by School House Partners and noted the implications for reinvestment of dollars. She stated this second external audit confirmed the results of the initial audit.

Carr shared that Guilford County is identified as a district of color, and spoke to cultural diversity amongst the students and its ability to create a more complex school system.

Carr discussed the extended time it takes to fill positions and attributed this to lower salaries. She stated this year's budget will focus on supporting GCS employees.

Angie Henry, GCS Chief Financial Officer, noted over 1,900 GCS employees fall below poverty standards. She spoke to difficulties in hiring bus drivers, as qualification standards have increased and GCS is unable to offer a competitive salary.

Henry stated teacher salaries are determined by the state, and noted that they must supplement salaries through local funding to remain competitive in recruitment efforts.

Henry stated the GCS budget request of \$9 million for operations is a 5% increase from last year. She shared challenges with budgeting, and noted the requirement to fund charter schools, which increases annually.

Carr stated the loss of children from public to charter schools has not resulted in a reduction in school funding, but noted the system has a complex composition of students with more significant disabilities.

Commissioner Henning questioned the total amount of per pupil funding, when the County's allocation is included.

Henry stated the average amount per pupil is \$4500 to \$5000, and noted this amount does not include federal funding. She confirmed the costs for high school students are normally higher than elementary school students. Henry noted the allotted ADM per student is slightly less than last year, and reviewed funding options if the Board chose to fund GCS based upon the Manager's recommendation.

Alan Duncan, GCS BOE Chairman, noted teacher recruitment and retention have become major concerns, as fewer students are entering this profession. He stated a local supplement is necessary to make careers in education attractive.

Carr thanked County Manager Marty Lawing and Deputy County Manager Clarence Grier for their willingness to collaborate and create a good system for GCS children.

Commissioner Conrad questioned if the permission to transfer \$200,000 designated for custodial services to pay for teacher's salaries was authorized at the school or administrative level

Carr confirmed the school administration has the authority to transfer those funds.

Commissioner Conrad requested review of the maintenance performance contracts.

Duncan discussed conferences related to renewable energy attended by GCS staff and BOE members, and noted the associated legislative impediments. He discussed the option to replace existing lighting with LED fixtures and stated the cost return is significant.

Commissioner Conrad stated performance contracting is becoming a state standard, and was pleased Guilford County had begun utilizing them. He questioned if there had been a review of school leases, and noted the trend towards performance contracting in this area.

Duncan stated GCS is considering this option, and are working to identify counties where this practice has been successful. He stated operations funding is allocated towards lease payments.

Commissioner Perdue spoke to issues with hiring bus drivers and citizen concerns regarding buses transporting one (1) or two (2) students. He questioned the amount GCS spends on busing, and if staff had researched school transportation models in other counties.

Carr stated the small numbers of riders could be attributed to those enrolled in EC programs, as well as, students who attend magnet or choice schools.

Perdue questioned the option of providing private bus transportation to students suspended from riding their regular bus.

Dr. Terrence Young, GCS Co-Superintendent, discussed utilizing buses with low numbers of children, and noted they are working towards increasing efficiencies on bus routes, despite not having GPS on all buses.

Perdue expressed concerns regarding vocational training and noted few options to train skilled tradesmen.

Carr stated these programs are still in place and noted a large percentage of students participate in these programs. She spoke to the costly expense of the equipment and tools utilized by these programs and noted they are not offered at every school.

Commissioner Henning questioned the square footage for capital expenses and if personnel shortages impact the amount of dollars spent towards school capital.

Carr stated school capacity requirements are heavily regulated and spoke to the value of maintaining additional reserves in the capital fund to address emergency issues such as roof and/or boiler replacement, and damages or loss related to fire.

Gerald Greeson, GCS Facilities, reported the average age of GCS buildings is approximately thirty (30) years old.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the credentialing of trade skills.

Carr stated GCS offers credentialing in Microsoft products, aviation, construction and for the professions of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) and electricians.

Cashion questioned the Twilight School in Greensboro, and the potential to open a new program.

Carr stated the current school serves between seventy (70) to eighty (80) students per year and confirmed the budget includes funding to open a new school in High Point. Carr noted these students have not been successful in a traditional or magnet school setting, and the program is a last chance option designed to aid them in achieving their high school diploma.

Duncan shared this program has graduated over 700 students in the past eight (8) years, and stated the primary expense for the Twilight School is transportation costs.

Vice Chairman Branson questioned if GCS considered hiring teenagers to meet transportation needs or researched the option of offering CDL training in high schools.

Chairman Phillips spoke to the audit recommendations and questioned the suggestion to eliminate data manager positions at a savings of approximately \$4 million annually.

Duncan opined on the responsibilities of data managers and stated teachers may have difficulty assuming those duties, in addition to their daily classroom obligations.

Carr confirmed the GCS review including evaluating the external audit recommendations.

Chairman Phillips questioned the data manager role and the process utilized by School House Partners that resulted in their recommendation to eliminate these positions.

Duncan stated the external auditors did not evaluate the daily responsibilities of the positions, and did not gain a clear understanding of their important role within the school system.

Young discussed the Power School data management system and spoke to the data manager's role in creating monthly reports that track state funding, in addition to other data.

Carr noted GCS spends approximately \$8,000 per pupil, with all funding sources included.

Young confirmed the final recommendation from the external auditors was to conduct a detailed review of the data manager positions.

Chairman Phillips spoke to the unexpended dollars in the capital maintenance fund at the end of year and questioned the request for increased funding when these unexpended dollars are allocated annually.

Duncan stated GCS has historically maintained a lean fund balance, and spoke to the example of the Eastern Guilford High School fire in 2006 that emphasized the importance of have capital funds immediately available to handle crises while ensuring ongoing expenses are covered for the remainder of the school year. He noted this experience resulted in GCS being cautious in how they expended capital funds each year and noted many projects are completed during the summer months. He confirmed they are working through their list of capital needs.

Chairman Phillips GCS not fully utilizing allocated funds tends to drive Board decisions, and noted concerns received from several parents regarding immediate maintenance needs that are not addressed timely. He stated the Commissioners would like additional clarity regarding the process and prioritization of projects

Duncan discussed challenges with prioritizing projects and spoke to capital needs at Grimsley and Page high schools.

Reid Baker, Finance Director, stated approximately \$3 million remains in capital allocations for GCS and noted the County budget does not include encumbrances.

Duncan stated GCS will report on impediments to certain capital projects.

Chairman Phillips questioned a recent GCS facilities audit, comparable to the School House Partners operations audit, which reviewed the utilization and age of school facilities and suggested the possibility of consolidating or off-loading properties.

Duncan spoke to the facilities capacity review completed approximately 1½ years ago and noted its recommendations regarding maximization of school facilities. He suggested delaying review and implementation of the recommendations until a new superintendent has been hired and after the upcoming GCS BOE election.

Duncan discussed efficiencies related to the maintenance and custodial care of properties and noted an internal audit was conducted on their facilities department approximately 5-6 years ago.

Henry confirmed GCS has a developed a strategic plan which includes conducting a study of facilities utilization, but anticipated costs exceeding \$500,000.

Carr stated GCS staff would contact School House Partners to determine if they could conduct a search for an audit firm capable of completing this study.

Chairman Phillips clarified he was suggesting a study that assessed existing facilities and evaluated consolidation versus maintenance, and noted he was not suggesting school redistricting.

Duncan expressed his interest in working on this project.

Carr stated GCS is developing operational benchmarks based upon standards utilized by the top fifty (50) counties throughout the United States.

Chairman Phillips thanked GCS staff for their feedback and reminded them of the challenges faced by the Board in addressing the debt repayment for past issuances of bonds. He stated the debt service obligation will spike in the next two (2) years, from \$67 million to \$87 million annually. Phillips reiterated the Board is sensitive to GCS needs and the school system remains their number one priority.

The Board recessed the meeting at 2:45PM.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 3:00PM. Commissioner Conrad was absent from the meeting.

2. Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC)

Dr. Randy Parker, GTCC President, thanked the Board for their continued support of the college and stated they are very pleased with the County Manager's review of their budget. He spoke to their request for \$308,000 and noted FY 2017 will include expenditures for the Union Square lease agreement.

Commissioner Conrad returned to the meeting at 3:06PM.

Parker reviewed the current operations budget and discussed GTCC capital projects for FY 2016-2017. He stated proposed projects would be reassessed if the Board adopted the County Manager's recommended budget.

Perdue questioned the impact of NC Connect funds upon existing or proposed projects.

Parker stated they were unable to determine when the funding would be received, and could not provide a timeframe regarding the proposed projects, such as construction at the Medlin Campus. He discussed their plans to advertise for bids for the design phase and to conduct a feasibility study.

Commissioner Henning clarified the proposed projects are not in priority order.

Parker confirmed they projects are not prioritized, but included in the presentation as part of GTCC's ten (10) year strategic plan.

Commissioner Cashion questioned if the student population is increasing.

Parker stated there are pockets of growth and recession and noted GTCC's current population consists of approximately 40,000 students. He noted enrollment has increased in Continuing Education programs, and spoke to the nation-wide trend towards decreased enrollment in degree programs. Parker stated the average age of students is late 20's and early 30's.

H. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

1. School Nurses

Lawing requested the Board consider school nurse positions and their potential configuration.

Green confirmed staff had identified Title I schools where the recommended pilot project could be conducted.

Lawing noted if the Board chose to adopt the option of three (3) CNA's versus one (1) registered nurse (RN), there would be an additional cost of \$60,000, for a total of \$126,000.

Green reiterated most of the school nurse positions are ten (10) month positions.

Chairman Phillips questioned if the Board had any objections to the pilot project.

Green clarified that the one (1) school nurse position would be in addition to the three (3) CNA's included in the pilot program.

Chairman Phillips stated his understanding that the three (3) CNA's would be in lieu of the one (1) school nurse position.

Green advocated for the one (1) school nurse position, in addition to the three (3) CNA's.

Commissioner Perdue questioned the average number of students assisted by the school nurse.

Green stated that a school nurse assists a student every twenty-three (23) minutes.

Commissioner Perdue questioned the average time involved in supervising the duties of a CNA.

Green stated once the CNA is certified by the nurse, they are able to work independently.

Commissioner Conrad expressed his support of adding the CNA positions in lieu of the RN position.

Chairman Phillips questioned the current number of GCS school nurses.

Green discussed their interest in piloting programs in Greensboro and High Point, and noted the need for additional school health resources.

Chairman Phillips questioned if it was the Board's desire to consider adding a \$5,000 incentive for an existing nurse to oversee the pilot program.

Commissioner Conrad opined on the substantial workload involved in providing nursing services for three (3) schools, and noted there would be no need for an incentive, as the pilot program would eliminate some of the burden.

Commissioner Perdue spoke to the differences in medical supervision, versus supervision in other industries, and noted this person works independently based upon predetermined protocols.

Chairman Phillips stated that the majority of the Board supported adding three (3) CNA positions in lieu of one (1) school nurse position.

Commissioner Cashion expressed her concession to the CNA positions, and noted her preference to include the one (1) school nurse position.

2. Eligibility Positions

Elizabeth White, DHHS-DSS Economic Services Division Director, discussed increases in caseload size and processing timeframes within the NCFAST case management system. She reviewed the request and financial impact for the proposed seven (7) new positions.

Phillips questioned the impact of the thirty (30) positions recently added to the department on their use of overtime to process cases.

Myra Thompson, DHHS-DSS Administrative Services Division Director, spoke to their ability to reduce overtime, dependent upon recruitment and training timeframes.

White stated they are not observing efficiencies in the NCFAST process, but have noticed the reduction in process work-arounds. She stated it takes approximately one (1) hour to process a Medicaid recertification or application, and noted NC Department of Health & Human Services (NCDHHS) is working to correct deficiencies and defects within the system.

Commissioner Perdue questioned the number of vacancies, and total number of staff in training within Economic Services.

White stated the division has four (4) vacancies, and sixteen (16) caseworkers will be released from training next week.

Commissioner Perdue stated the division has twenty (20) positions that are currently not 100% productive and requested more accurate data prior to considering approval of additional positions. He questioned the status of correcting issues within the NCFAST system.

Thompson stated the current system is utilized by all NC counties, and noted the system's processing speed is dependent upon the number of users actively working in the software.

Commissioner Perdue expressed concerns regarding the costs associated with the NCFAST system and recommended the Board begin lobbying the state regarding the system's inefficiencies.

Lawing stated out of all the recommended positions, he considers eligibility positions a priority.

Thompson spoke to the department's ability to utilize lapsed salary funds to cover County costs for these positions.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the department's retention rate.

White stated that the division has already lost four (4) staff from the thirty (30) recently approved positions, and confirmed they have experienced a 30% turnover rate within the past 1 ½ years. She noted department supervisors average 50-60 hours per week, as a result of staff shortages.

Chairman Phillips stated that he would support reconsidering the request once more data is collected and all new positions are filled.

Commissioner Perdue urged DSS evaluate part-time positions as an option to fill the void and meet the increasing demand created by turnover.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the utilization of retiree callbacks.

White confirmed they currently have no retirees available at this time.

3. New Overtime Regulations

Lawing stated the new statute implementing salary thresholds that make more employees eligible for overtime compensation will become effective December 1, 2016. He noted the longevity bonus does count towards the minimum salary requirements, with limitations.

Lawing spoke to the merits of adding longevity payments to employee salaries, and stated staff will evaluate the potential impact of the statute over the next two (2) months and return to the Board with recommendations. He noted the threshold will be readjusted upwards every three (3) years, and emphasized the need to continue funding the merit pool and pay plan.

J. DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR BUDGET REQUESTS TO COMMISSIONERS

Catherine Johnson, Family Justice Center (FJC) Director, provided an overview of the demand for FJC and noted they have served over 4,300 clients during their inaugural year.

Johnson reviewed demographic statistics and noted approximately 80% of their clients are female. She stated the length of the average visit is approximately three (3) hours.

Johnson discussed the efficiencies developed with the electronic filing process for restraining orders, and shared the improvements in safety planning for at-risk clients with this new program.

Johnson stated maintaining standard operations and addressing the volume of client needs requires forty (40) to sixty (60) hours of volunteer hours per week, and noted she was aware the current staffing structure of three (3) positions was not sustainable to meet the demand for services within the first six (60 weeks of operations. Johnson stated FJC partners have shifted resources to ensure adequate staff and reported she utilized lapsed salaries to hire a part-time temporary position at 25 hours per week. She clarified the manager's recommendation did not include the part-time temporary position or her request for a full-time client services administrator position to assist with the increasing workload.

Johnson reviewed the staffing options that could be utilized to maintain operations and discussed the impact to services if no part time or full time positions were included in the budget.

Johnson confirmed the FJC utilizes a large number of students enrolled in Masters in Social Work (MSW) programs; however, intern schedules are unreliable as they fluctuate based upon their school calendar.

Commissioner Perdue questioned how staffing would impact extending FJC services to High Point.

Johnson shared her conversations with the High Point Police Department, and stated the expansion would be delayed without a full time position.

Chairman Phillips questioned if the Board objected to the staffing request and expressed his support for the request.

Johnson noted her recommended budget does include funding for operational expenses.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to the tremendous job FJC staff have done with limited resources.

By general consensus, the Board directed staff to add the requested position into the budget ordinance.

Johnson reminded the Board of the FJC one (1) year anniversary celebration on Wednesday June 15, 2016 at 4:00pm.

Tom Campbell, CEO of Family Service of the Piedmont, thanked the Board for its support of the FJC and shared the number of victims with the ability to access services has tripled since its implementation.

Colonel Randy Powers, Sheriff's Office, reviewed the existing staff positions for the patrol districts throughout the County, and discussed his request for nine (9) additional patrol officers.

Powers stated that, upon statistical review, the districts have insufficient staffing to cover leave of absences and trainings, resulting in uncovered zones. He discussed average response times, and noted their increase from 11:09 minutes in 2014 to 11:16 minutes currently.

Powers reviewed his request for ten (10) detention officers to accommodate a new regulation under the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) that will require segregation of sixteen (16) year old inmates from the general population. He spoke to the need to open two (2) additional pods, one for males and one for females, to satisfy the new requirements.

Vice Chairman Branson questioned if this regulation was mandated at the state or federal level.

Powers confirmed the mandate was federal and noted North Carolina is one of the few states where offenders under age 18 are considered as adults in the detention system. He stated with the new requirements, offenders must be segregated from the general population. Powers spoke to existing vacant positions, and noted this request does not have to be addressed until the law becomes effective; however, turnover rates and training timeframes result in the need for additional preparation time.

Commissioner Conrad questioned if any towns within the County assist with patrol.

Powers confirmed Jamestown provides five (5) officers and five (5) cars to assist with patrol; however, noted Stokesdale is considering remove the one (1) officer and car currently in this role, from their budget.

Michael Halford, Budget Director, noted the cost is approximately \$72,000 for the Stokesdale officer. He confirmed if the town chose to eliminate this position, the Board must specifically allocate funds to absorb this position.

Chairman Phillips expressed concerns regarding the additional positions and noted the Board is budgeting \$125,000 towards retention pay for detention officers.

Vice Chairman Branson questioned the success of the outreach campaign.

Powers spoke to the successes of the program, but noted recruits must meet departmental standards. He confirmed there are more vacancies than new recruits and discussed department efforts throughout and beyond the state. Powers noted the bulk of candidates are in their 20's and 30's.

Commissioner Perdue questioned the industry recommendations for the percentage of time officers should accomplish a four (4) minute response time.

Powers stated he will research and provide this information to the Board.

Chairman Phillips requested feedback from department regarding the potential impact of the PREA regulation.

Commissioner Perdue expressed his concerns for rural areas and spoke to the requirements to wait for patrol officers to arrive before personnel could provide emergency services.

Chairman Phillips questioned if data could be provided regarding wait times of first responders for arrival of law enforcement officers.

Commissioner Perdue noted the possibility of pulling data from Guilford Metro.

Jim Albright, Emergency Services Director, noted the labor intensive process of retrieving this data, and confirmed a measure could be implemented to identify this information.

Vice Chairman Branson questioned the number of citizens who repeatedly contact law enforcement or first responders with non-emergency needs, and expressed concern with their potential to increase the costs of these services.

Powers noted that, while these calls may not be associated with true emergencies, they must be cleared by law enforcement to ensure there is no potential threat to a first responder.

Vice Chairman Branson questioned the ability of first responders to assist in potentially threatening situations.

Chairman Phillips requested additional feedback from Powers regarding the status of this request.

I. RECREATION & CULTURE

1. Parks and Recreation

Carmen Mays, Budget Analyst, reviewed the recommendation to include \$75,000 in the County budget for part-time Parks employee salaries, to remain competitive in the market. She discussed the differences in pay between newly hired employees versus those with experience. Mays reviewed the new administrative assistant position at Bur-Mil park and noted the potential for revenue generated from clubhouse reservations and sales to offset the position salary. She spoke to additional funding needs to repair safety stations and the HVAC system.

McNiece noted the part-time positions would have responsibilities related to grounds and basic facility maintenance.

Halford noted the County cost for parks is still less than the 2010 expense, when municipalities were charging for their maintenance, and noted the revenue generated has offset the additional expenses.

2. Cooperative Extension

Jason Jones, Budget Analyst, discussed increases in the NC State University Family & Consumer Sciences position salary, housed with the Cooperative Extension budget, which would allow the position to remain dedicated full-time to Guilford County. He confirmed if the County chose not to increase its allocation, staff would have to identify another county willing to share salary expenses, or eliminate the position.

Karen Neill, Cooperative Extension Director, noted this position oversees three (3) other staff who manage the expanded Food & Nutrition Services (FNS) program.

The Board and staff discussed the duties of this position.

Jones reviewed changes in the Cooperative Extension Center fee schedule, and noted the addition of fees for the shared-use kitchen. He stated no additional County funds would be allocated, as revenues would offset expenses, as discussed changes to rental and application fees.

3. Municipal Library Funding Assistance

Ben Kittleson, Budget Analyst, reviewed Library funding indicating that the county was recommending contracting at current rates.

K. RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGETS/TAX RATES

Halford discussed changes to the Fire Districts, and noted the error in revenues for the Whitsett Fire Department. He confirmed there was no increase in the fire taxes and discussed changes to fire inspection and investigation fees which would result in a \$10,000 difference in the County budget.

Commissioner Henning questioned if these changes had been discussed with town citizens.

Albright noted the fire inspection and investigation fee expenses are normally passed on to the local businesses. He discussed the legacy agreements currently in place for medic organizations, and spoke to the need to begin review of these contracts in the near future.

Commissioner Henning suggested beginning the conversation with the impacted municipalities.

Albright stated he will contact the towns and be prepared to discuss changes effective FY 2018.

N. REVIEW BUDGET ORDINANCE CHANGES

Halford discussed a fund balance policy change which would unassign \$100,000 designated towards a loan category previously that could be utilized by the fire districts to meet emergency needs.

Baker confirmed the County has authority to loan funds to the fire districts without this category, and noted the nominal amount would provide little assistance to a district in 2016.

Halford requested an assigned fund balance for unexpended grants or donations to the FJC, which will allow the Center to easily use these funds in the future, as they would not be assigned to the general fund balance.

Chairman Phillips questioned if these funds could be used towards FJC staff positions.

Baker noted donors normally indicate their intent for funds to aid in the Center operations or purchase of technology and would not recommend basing staff positions off of donations.

Halford spoke to the Tax Department's need for an online service at the expense of \$10,000, and confirmed additional funding was available to offset the County costs.

Lawing questioned if the Board preferred to continue its discussion of Economic Development appropriations.

The Board declined to pursue this discussion.

Robin Keller, Clerk to Board, reminded the Board of the work session scheduled for Monday, June 13, 2016 at 1:00PM.

By general consensus, the Board decided to cancel the June 13, 2016 work session.

Baker discussed initial loan request and 2/3 bond options, and spoke to the lost opportunity to approve the bond after the budget was adopted during the June 16, 2016 regular meeting. He requested the Board add a motion to approve the loan from the General Fund to the School Capital Outlay Fund.

Chairman Phillips expressed his concerns with the loan and with moving existing reserves. He spoke to the County's ability to utilize allocations resulting from budget shortfalls from existing capital projects.

Lawing reiterated the opportunity of the loan and noted this will expire if not adopted with the FY 2017 budget.

Chairman Phillips stated he would communicate and discuss this request with the Board.

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the Board adjourned the meeting through unanimous consent at 5:21pm.

5:21pm.	
	Jeffrey M. Phillips, Chairman Guilford County Board of Commissioners
Robin Keller Clerk to Board	