

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

Greensboro, North Carolina
July 18, 2024

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed Work Session at 3:00 p.m. in the Carolyn Q. Coleman Conference Room located on the first floor of the Old County Courthouse, 301 W. Market St., Greensboro, NC.

PRESENT: Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston, presiding; Commissioners Kay Cashion, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Carly Cooke, Brandon Gray-Hill, Pat Tillman, Mary Beth Murphy, and Alan Perdue (via virtual communication).

ABSENT: Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Michael Halford; County Attorney Andrea Leslie-Fite; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; Deputy Clerk to Board Ariane Webb, Deputy Clerk to Board T’ebony Rosa; Jason Jones, Assistant County Manager; Victor Isler, Assistant County Manager; Erris Dunston, Assistant County Manager; Danny Rogers, Guilford County Sheriff; Eric Hilton, Facilities 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 3:10 p.m.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. SHERIFF’S DEPUTIES AND DETENTION OFFICER PAY REVIEW

County Manager Michael Halford introduced the agenda item and provided an historical overview of the pay schedules for Sheriff Deputies and Detention Officers since 2021. He highlighted a compensation study, an implementation plan, and vacancies. He spoke to an at-market (50th percentile) pay structure based on updated information for the fiscal year 2022.

Halford noted that for fiscal year 2023, the recommended budget included \$2M based on market conditions for separate pay structure adjustments. He shared that the 50th percentile market rates cost increased by approximately \$1.4M on an annual basis. He explained local base pay market conditions across Greensboro, High Point, and Alamance peer jurisdictions. He described

sliding-scale incentives including additional education, bilingual capabilities, and prior military experience.

Halford explained base starting pay for Deputy Sheriff and Detention Officer positions. He provided an overview of the law enforcement pay plan according to percentile alignment. He shared that an additional \$500,000 is needed to bring the position pay up to the 50th percentile.

Halford shared the expenditure differences between the split and equal percentiles. He noted the command structure within the Sheriff's Office with market salary fluctuations. He spoke to an October implementation and requested Board direction post-budget adoption.

Chairman Alston recognized Sheriff Danny Rogers and sought clarification regarding equal versus split advantages and disadvantages in regard to locking the Sworn Deputy Sheriff's pay plan to the Non-Sworn Detention Officers pay plan.

Rogers highlighted the position differences. He spoke to law enforcement pay equity between detention and sworn positions. He provided a perspective of job responsibilities, inherent risks for both positions, and to have a holistic approach to pay structure determination. He described recruitment and retention challenges.

Chairman Alston reiterated associated risk factors with both positions.

Rogers noted industry issues such as low staffing, mental health, morale, and potential dual certification requirements.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the organizational position review process.

Halford confirmed a one-third (1/3) process rotation review was in place.

Commissioner Murphy questioned vacancy rates.

Rogers confirmed seventy-one (71) Detention and forty-four (44) Patrol vacancies. He noted 276 sworn and 330 Detention Officer full-time positions.

Commissioner Murphy noted revenue shortfalls and lower sales tax collection. She advocated for splitting the sworn officer and detention officer positions in the pay plan to be more advantageous to the County. She noted the varying position requirements justified different salary structures. She spoke to exit interview data collection.

Rogers confirmed reasons for position exit include higher pay, career changes, or returning to school.

Commissioner Murphy highlighted the 16% Patrol and 21.5% Detention Officer position vacancy rates. She questioned peer jurisdiction statistics.

Halford noted the vacancy rate.

Commissioner Tillman questioned a pay equity objective regarding training hours.

Rogers noted fourteen (14) Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) weeks for Patrol and five (5) weeks of Department of Corrections Training for detention positions. He shared incentives for higher education, prior experience, and other factors.

Commissioner Tillman highlighted equitable factors to contribute to pay differences.

Rogers emphasized morale challenges and decreased application pools for detention positions and that it is his preference to keep the two pay classifications on the same pay schedule.

Commissioner Tillman questioned position funding amounts.

Chairman Alston reiterated the cost differential depends on the split versus equal pay.

Commissioner Tillman questioned American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding sources.

Commissioner Cooke questioned affordability and funding sources. She furthered questioned peer-market detention center position salaries.

Halford spoke to an industry split-pay structure was more common than joining the two.

Commissioner Jones noted law enforcement career opportunities in split-salary jurisdictions.

Rogers confirmed peer county competition. He noted the physical and mental risks of current mandatory overtime requirements due to the high vacancy rates.

Commissioner Jones noted the price differential of paying overtime versus allotting a raise.

Commissioner Cashion questioned market leaders and the preferred percentile.

Rogers confirmed a market spread between 68% and 73% equal pay for the next three (3) years.

Commissioner Cashion recalled a 75th percentile determination months ago as a goal.

Chairman Alston noted a split pay preference due to training, certification, and risk differentials. He referred to promotional incentives. He preferred the 75th percentile split funding through the utilization of the unassigned \$6M earmarked for Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) funding through ARPA.

Chairman Alston spoke to a \$10M ARPA funds transferred to our operating fund for ISD with only \$4M anticipated to be spent over the course of the next four (4) years.

Halford clarified monies to be allocated to other cohorts such as homelessness prevention and the Women and Children Recovery Center could be potential utilization of the additional 6M.

Chairman Alston emphasized that utilizing unspent ARPA enabled funds could help with reoccurring costs over the four-year period without affecting fund balance or incurring budget adjustments from other departments.

Commissioner Murphy spoke in opposition to using ISD funds and to implementing a properly integrated system countywide. She reiterated that all county positions were set at 50% of the market for salaries. She shared the public discord of moving two (2) position classifications

outside the percentile threshold. She opined fiscal year 2025 impacts and spoke to successful market indicators.

Chairman Alston reiterated the recruitment and retention urgency to decrease Sheriff's Office vacancies. He emphasized the training component expenditures only to have the same employee transfer to another agency with bonus and incentive pay.

Commissioner Cooke spoke to similar conversations regarding our school system salaries. She requested additional time to review and discuss an action plan prior to budget adjustments. She emphasized the countywide ISD impacts and additional cohorts that could be added.

Chairman Alston spoke to an October pay structure implementation. He reiterated the possible \$6M budget availability.

Commissioner Tillman questioned the pay scale effects.

Halford confirmed if approved he would recommend the first full pay period in October.

Commissioner Perdue spoke to data drivers, to projected expenditures, to workload, and to critical decision making. He highlighted exit interviews to assist in making determinations of why personnel leave. He noted unintended consequences of compression issues because of changing starting salaries within ranked officers that deter promotions.

Commissioner Jones requested for staff to provide data regarding detention center mandatory overtime expenditures. He opined not to cut that much funding from one area and shared that he wanted to explore other potential funding sources.

Halford confirmed \$4.9M overtime expenses and no reoccurring expenses in the current budget. He requested guidance regarding Board priorities.

Commissioner Jones spoke to work-life balance and to ongoing mandatory overtime consequences for those in these positions.

Rogers confirmed the high overtime hours were due to short staffing and to burnout.

Commissioner Tillman spoke to a cycle of pay increases along with vacancies. He requested data regarding pay rates, vacancies, and retention rates. He noted the military exit interview process.

Commissioner Murphy requested staff to provide data regarding overtime savings as we consider increasing pay and decreasing vacancies for the law enforcement positions.

Halford confirmed adding forty (40) positions to fill in the gaps to cover basic shifts, considering vacations and sick leave.

Chairman Alston noted the difference between mandatory and voluntary overtime at time and a half.

Commissioner Murphy opined a no-overtime policy with the pay increase due to lack of affordability.

B. VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PLAN & FUNDING REVIEW

Halford introduced the agenda item and noted the current replacement schedule for general county fleet, emergency services vehicles, and the Sheriff's Office. He noted reimbursements and diesel engine longevity. He highlighted peer county review criteria.

Halford noted a pre-pandemic cash payout structure between \$3-4M. He noted a \$4.4M FY23 vehicle allocation. He shared a post-pandemic vehicle financing structure of approximately \$1.3M as there is no funding included in the FY25 budget.

Halford noted the department replacement capacities for an issuance of \$4.4M.

Commissioner Perdue voiced concern regarding skipping the vehicular replacement as it doubles the number for next year. He spoke to additional vehicles outside the presentation listing. He highlighted further stretching mileage and public safety impacts of unavailable emergency vehicles.

Chairman Alston referred to slide 14 (Replacement Capacity) and questioned if each department had met the criteria.

Halford confirmed his previous recommendation if property taxes were approved. He further confirmed a four (4) year term.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the terms.

Halford confirmed the fourth year from the pandemic (year 2026) and minor interest rate changes. He spoke to doubling the financing to \$2.6M to get back on schedule.

Chairman Alston spoke to utilizing fund balance and pay it back the following year without incurring interest payments.

Halford expressed concern regarding using one-time funding for reoccurring expenses that would affect the County's AAA bond rating.

Commissioner Tillman emphasized being fiscally responsible. He shared that skipping years is not wise.

Commissioner Perdue spoke to compounding problems not only for vehicle replacement but for service delivery to the community. He shared an example of an ambulance breaking down on the way to a service call. He noted inherent risks and impending issues.

Commissioner Cashion questioned fund balance utilization.

Halford confirmed 14-15% usage this year. He noted that the vehicle numbers presented represent an approximate base of what needs to be replaced.

Commissioner Cooke spoke to funding models and stability regarding being fiscally responsible.

Chairman Alston noted the urgency of the replacement request.

Commissioner Perdue shared the production time for specialty vehicles.

Motion made by Commissioner Alan Perdue, seconded by Commissioner Pat Tillman, to approve the vehicle replacement plan by 2025 as presented, looking at the most beneficial payment method for Guilford County staff to determine, whether leasing or using fund balance, and using the best financing strategy, or pay-as-you-go.

Commissioner Cooke voiced concern regarding the motion and spoke in opposition to a cash funding model. She supported a financing model.

Friendly amendment by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy to use a financing model with a fund balance appropriation of \$1,276,431 to pay financing costs for FY25 vehicle replacement.

Commissioner Perdue accepted the friendly amendment.

Commissioner Jones clarified striking the leasing option from the main motion.

Commissioner Tillman agreed.

Halford confirmed the financing model is based on the market interest rate. He recommended rounding up to a \$1.3M allocation prior to the vehicle bidding process. He noted not having a current price quote.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the proposed price estimate.

Halford confirmed a FY23 plan based on Board policy.

Commissioner Cooke suggested maintaining the current \$1.3M allocation and returning to the Board for any price differentials during the bidding process.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the funding source for the requested number of vehicles.

Halford confirmed utilizing future budget amendments.

Commissioner Perdue spoke to a dollar amount to commence the bidding process and to Board action to prioritize and allocate additional funding during the contract period per departmental needs.

Commissioner Cooke clarified the debt repayment amount regarding this fiscal year's budget.

Halford spoke to a policy regarding vehicle replacement capacity and to a \$1.3M figure.

Amended motion made by Commissioner Alan Perdue, seconded by Commissioner Pat Tillman, to approve using a financing model of \$1.3M fund balance appropriation to pay financing costs for FY25 vehicle replacement.

The amended motion passed unanimously.

C. MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

Halford introduced the agenda item and recognized Facilities Director Eric Hilton.

Hilton highlighted the Lee's Chapel Road interior upfit protocols. He spoke to an implementation timeline and to a current budget status. He noted the bidding process, scope reviews and guaranteed maximum price (GMP) finalization.

Hilton displayed an illustrative interior color-coded rendering and noted exterior concerns regarding additional parking spaces via a covered drive-through removal.

Chairman Alston voiced concerns regarding the exterior changes due to inclement weather.

Hilton confirmed topographical issues and the unsoundness of the covered structure.

Jim Albright, Emergency Services Director, clarified the structure's limited dimensions and noted an inability to maneuver emergency service vehicles.

Discussion ensued regarding the sidewalk, ingress impediments, and parking spaces.

Chairman Alston suggested entranceway design alterations.

Hilton noted population service changes and revisiting adjusted awning design schematics.

Commissioner Jones noted the community aesthetic viewpoint and substantial zoning concerns.

Chairman Alston reiterated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility and spoke to tightening the review schedule.

Commissioner Perdue proposed a cantilevered awning.

Halford suggested two (2) design options for Board action due to stormwater retention.

Hilton explained the additional time for the design process.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the Daymark facility entrance.

Hilton confirmed there was no awning or covered entrance at Daymark. He noted an inclined entranceway.

Hilton continued the presentation and provided an overview of the Erwin Elementary School demolition project, the response for proposals (RFP) process, the removal of a Duke Energy line, and a timeline for completion towards stabilization grading.

Halford noted the National Association of Counties (NACo) Committee for Housing Solutions, the application process, an eight (8) to ten (10) week sprint to identify capacity and community engagement with the Development Finance Initiative (DFI).

Commissioner Jones expressed caution regarding the unintentional consequences of using an affordable housing scheme in low-income census tracts. He urged City of Greensboro collaborations due to sensitivity around poverty. He spoke to proceeding gently with the messaging and having a communication plan.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to having access to a proven program for county-owned land.

Commissioner Jones reiterated community feedback and intentional messaging.

Hilton continued the presentation and noted updates to the Law Enforcement Administration demolition project, and commended Blum and D.H. Griffin. He provided a timeline for completion and displayed an aerial photo array timeline.

Hilton spoke to the Greensboro Plaza and parking deck projects. He noted asbestos abatement and a percentage towards completion.

Chairman Alston voiced concern regarding underground parking.

Hilton confirmed construction and rebar repair with a month-long timeline to open parking.

Clerk to the Board Robin Keller identified impacted Board parking space led to shifting accommodations.

Hilton shared waterproofing removal allows for water drips.

Chairman Alston noted vehicle damage.

Hilton displayed a demolition progression photo array and noted a May-June 2025 completion.

Hilton continued the presentation and shared the package of design-build waterproofing repairs to the Greensboro and High Point Detention Centers, Greensboro Public Health, Greensboro Courthouse, and High Point Plaza along with price points and percentage completion rates. He spoke to the Greensboro and High Point Courthouses elevator modifications and to limiting operational impacts.

Hilton shared the High Point Jail roof replacement project, the Greensboro Jail shower coating project, the High Point Jail generator end-of-life expenditures, and the Dundas Circle renovation. He noted service relocation during construction.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for this agenda.

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business the work session was adjourned by Board consensus at 5:26 p.m.

Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chairman

Robin Keller
Clerk