

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

Greensboro, North Carolina
June 9, 2020

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed Work Session at 11:30PM in the Blue Room located on the first floor of the Old County Courthouse, 301 W. Market St., Greensboro, NC.

PRESENT: Chairman Jeff Phillips, presiding; Vice Chairman Alan Perdue
Commissioners Alan Branson (in at 11:50PM); Melvin “Skip” Alston and
Hank Henning, J. Carlvena Foster, Justin Conrad; Kay Cashion; Carolyn
Q. Coleman (in at 11:42PM)

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Marty Lawing; County Attorney Mark Payne; Deputy
County Manager Clarence Grier; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; Ariane
Webb, Deputy Clerk to Board; Worley Smith, Communications Manager;
Sheriff D. H. Rogers; Alex Smith Interim Budget Director; Catherine
Johnson, Family Justice Center Director; Angela Liverman, Child Support
Director; various county staff and members of the media. Virtual
participation was made available to the general public.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Phillips welcomed everyone present and called the meeting to order at 11:30AM.

County Manager Lawing shared that the purpose of the meeting was to bring everyone up to speed regarding the County’s Federal Cares Funding.

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Phillips welcomed all those present and called the meeting to order at 11:30AM.

County Manager Marty Lawing shared that this is our second work session on the proposed recommended budget. He noted that some of the items are new and haven’t been discussed yet; particularly as they relate to revenue.

Lawing advised that traditionally we provided our department directors to speak directly to the board on items that were not approved or reduced in the Manager's recommended budget.

II. LAW ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Sheriff Rogers provided a recent update on local events and the response of the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Rogers spoke to the large group of peaceful protesters. He shared the role of law enforcement in supporting such times. He spoke to the ongoing need in staffing. He thanked the board for their support of their barricade tool that was recently approved at the last regular Board meeting. Sheriff Rogers explains the type of equipment and resources they have on hand. He spoke to the Department's expansion request for additional positions in this year's budget. He noted the ongoing hiring efforts of the department. Sheriff Rogers thanked Chairman Phillips, Vice Chairman Perdue, and Commissioner Alston for their efforts in communication.

Vice Chairman Perdue thanked, Sheriff Rogers and his team for all their efforts. He noted that we have had Deputies shot in the line of duty this year and spoke in support of adequately funding law enforcement.

Commissioner Foster thanked Sheriff Rogers for responding and providing back up support during an unpeaceful protest as well as their support during a peaceful protest. Foster also thanked the department for being visible in High Point. She shared her support of the Department. The work that they are doing is very necessary and would support adding additional officers.

Commissioner Coleman noted a couple of articles in the newspaper and on Facebook about equipment funding for the department.

Sheriff Rogers spoke to the recent acquisition, he spoke to the need and gave an example where deputies could not reach a top floor level and two of our deputies were being shot at due to our inability to gain access to protect them. The tool, the machine that we ordered, will help protect our Deputies from gun play. This acquisition was not purchased to show a military force, it was purchased for the safety of our deputies working in the field.

Commissioner Coleman questioned who approved the purchase.

Chairman Phillips clarified that it was an agenda item that came before the board and was approved at the last regular meeting.

Commissioner Coleman questioned if the equipment was resold from the government.

Sheriff Rogers clarified that it was not. He shared that they do have a large truck to move large numbers of deputies quickly as needed rather than multiple cars. The vehicle is also used to transport needed supplies. Sheriff Rogers noted that we are not a military organization, we are a law enforcement organization.

Commissioner Coleman questioned with regards to the equipment, that this was not the same equipment sold to sheriff and police departments following our return from the war?

Sheriff Rogers clarified that this was not the same equipment and that this was purchased new and he explained the difference in the equipment.

Commissioner Coleman asked a question regarding funding the Sheriff's Department. She is wondering if we are confused as to how funding is given and why.

Sheriff Rogers spoke to the ongoing support and needs of the Sheriff's Office. He also shared that they have worked hard to make the Sheriff's workforce mirror the demographics of the community. He shared that they prioritize cross training.

Commissioner Cashion thanked Sheriff Rogers for his hard work and encouraged the Sheriff to come to the Board more often as he has needs. She also shared she is pleased to hear about the Citizen's Advisory Committee and looks forward to hearing more about that. Commissioner Cashion asked if there is a plan for extra sensitivity training and also for clarity on what the 8 additional positions are to be.

Sheriff Rogers discussed the extra training in detail within the department and the need for the additional positions and why.

Commissioner Cashion thanked Sheriff Rogers and encouraged more communication between the department and the Board.

Commissioner Conrad thanked Sheriff Rogers and the efforts of his team.

Commissioner Foster spoke to the citizen review board that the City of Greensboro has and the disciplinary review board High Point has. She asked if the citizen's review board will act like Greensboro's board?

Sheriff Rogers shared that the advisory board would be guided by bringing concerns and solutions to help the county as a whole. He shared that the goal is to improve community relations, but the running of the Sheriff's office is the responsibility of the Sheriff's office.

Commissioner Foster questioned the role of the citizen advisory board and the role of internal affairs.

Sheriff Rogers discussed the internal affairs team and their role in complaints and investigations.

Commissioner Branson spoke to several questions on defunding law enforcement. He shared his appreciation of all those in uniform. He shared that these are probably some of the most trying times he has ever experienced in his life. He stated that he will continue his support of our law enforcement team.

Chairman Phillips echoed the support of our law enforcement and stated that it would be detrimental to defund our law enforcement agencies. He thanked the Sheriff and his staff.

III. GENERAL FUND REVENUES

Alex Smith, Interim Finance Director, began by reviewing recent economic indicators, such as unemployment rates and building permit issuances. He showed that most of our property tax is based on real property, followed by personal property and motor vehicles. He noted that we have continued to see a slight increase over the years. He noted that the State has extended motor vehicle tax revenue deadlines. There is possibility of lower collection in 2020 and a higher collection in 2021.

Smith noted that we continue to do well in collections of real property with no major concerns at this time. He stated that the most unknown revenue stream is sales tax impacts as result of COVID-19. Smith noted that in comparison of other counties we are at the higher end of the sales tax reduction.

Lawing stated that every county's projections are different. We are being fairly cautious in our projection as we cannot afford to miss the mark on this projection.

Commissioner Branson noted the unknowns associated with construction.

Lawing spoke to the option of not adopting a formal budget and doing a continuing budget. However, the problem comes in when levying taxes. We aim to get our tax bills out in late July. In order to be able to do that, we are trying to present a budget with the best projections that we can come up with. Hopefully most of the municipalities in Guilford County will be on that same track as we do their billing for them.

Commissioner Branson stated that several of the cities have indicated that they will stay the course from the prior year.

Lawing shared that most budgets he has seen is a hold the line budget. He has some information on what some are doing in regard to schools. He shared that his budget was an effort to remain flat from the prior year.

Smith stated we are not far off from where we were last year relatively speaking but we certainly are far away from where we would've been.

IV. OTHER REVENUES

V. GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Smith reviewed the Guilford County school funding recommendations. He shared that Guilford County has continued to remain in 5th place as far as per student operating funding amongst the big 10 counties.

Commissioner Cashion questioned if this includes funding for the debt service dollars.

Smith stated no, just operations and it does not include GTCC.

Commissioner Conrad out at 12:45PM

Commissioner Foster questioned the relative effort ranking.

Smith reviewed that it is county dollars by ADM, the calculation also includes total state funds as well. Smith shared that the County has approved in ranking despite the additional funding that other smaller counties have received by the state that we are not eligible for.

VI. FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGETS

Smith reviewed changes to the Gibsonville Fire Department. He provided information on revenues by type.

He reviewed the collection estimates and revenues for collections in the Fire District overlays. He noted that there is not a lot of cushion for the Fire Districts and over estimating their revenue could have significant funding shortfalls for them.

He noted some of the requests from the fire departments to add various positions and resources improvements for the various departments.

VII. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Smith noted that we have several projects on the plan with no identified funding source at this time. He noted that we may need to move some items out past 2025.

VIII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY FUNDING AND INCENTIVES

Foster noted that the Forward High Point Foundation did not reach out to the High Point commissioners and therefore she is unable to support their request as they have not submitted.

Henning out at 1:06

Cashion spoke in support of increasing the amount of Southwest renewal foundation from 25K to 50K

Foster echoed her support of the Southwest renewal request.

Smith reviewed the active incentive payouts for 2021

IX. REVIEW NEW POSITION

Smith reviewed the 8 new positions requested in the budget.

Foster noted that one Mental Health Director costs the same as 5 Deputy Sheriff's

Lawing reviewed the hiring schedule of the Mental Health Director. He advised the board that he anticipated the salary to be in the 100K range. He noted that the funds for the Deputies would be beginning at the half year mark.

Alston questioned the infant mortality coordinator position.

Dr. Vann shared that the plan would be for a Community Health Educator 2 position. She reviewed the expected roles of the position including an information mortality review committee. She noted that 70% of the deaths in the African American prenatal community is due to premature birth. She shared the health education and health promotion efforts would be targeted to three areas: pre-conception, the time between pregnancy, and after the baby is born post-partum.

Alston questioned the support system for that person.

Dr. Vann stated that this position will supervise a community health worker and will be a part of the community's infant mortality coalition which has an executive director and a larger team. She shared that the goal is to drop the mortality by 50%; which would bring it to the same rate of white infant deaths in Guilford County.

Alston shared that if we need additional resources, he would prefer to add more as he felt that a 5-year plan to reach that goal is far too long.

Alston questioned the specific causes of death of the infants.

Dr. Vann shared that the majority were caused to prematurity. She added that the role of the position will dive deeper into the causes. She shared that with our current partnerships with Ready Ready and Ready for life, we could have the task force operational in the next 2 months. She reviewed that they are looking at a task force model, including the number of people in the task force.

Alston asked for a monthly progress report of the task force and to be kept up to date on the initiative.

Perdue stated that these program are to change human behavior, and setting additional incremental goals that lead to this goal would also be beneficial.

Foster questioned how this work is different than Triad Baby Love and infant Mortality Coalition.

Dr. Vann stated that in 2021 the Infant Mortality Collation will turn 30 and will be rebranded and relaunched. But that this position and the County's infant mortality team work closely with the existing programs.

Commissioner Foster shared that many of the premature births have been attributed to no prenatal care or lack of prenatal care. She questioned who funds the coalition.

Dr. Vann stated that it is a public private partnership that is funding through grants. Dr. Vann shared that they would collect a larger multi-disciplinary task force to include the medical community.

Alston questioned the funding of the Infant Mortality Coalition. Alston asked if we provide resources and training to the larger network.

Foster stated that, they used to provide transportation and a “baby shower” to provide supplies to new moms as well as follow up support for those who need additional support for those new moms who did not get prenatal care and did not know how to manage and care for their infants.

Alston asked if there could be an enhanced services budget developed and brought back to the board.

Foster shared that she would be happy to work with the Infant Mortality Coalition.

X. ABC BOTTLE TAX/ GCSTOP

Smith reviewed the recommended allocations for the ABC Bottle Tax allocations

Henning in at 1:34PM

Albright asked to provide update on GC STOP

Albright stated that they have made significant inroads in this community pre-COVID. One of the statistics they have been looking at is death by overdose which was reduced. Those numbers have now rebounded back pre-program. Isolation and lack of medical resources has heavily impacted the program. He noted that we started this program in 2017 and this is the first time we are asking for County funding. Albright shared that they hope that with some of the litigation that is forthcoming that this is a short term request and hopefully will not need future County funding.

Smith stated that we have a leeway to change funding to Alcohol and Drug Services which facilitates a lot of our substance abuse programs.

Phillips noted that they are doing great work, but we have not seen a lot of updates form those funds.

Lawing stated that GCSTOP works closely with Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS).

Albright stated that this is strong seed money for us and will not prevent us from seeking other funding resource.

Foster thanked EMS for their support of some of the peaceful rallies.

Albright stated that they were happy to provide support.

XI. STAFF RECOMMENDED BUDGET CHANGES

Lawing sought input on the staff recommended changes to the budget. **By consensus the board had not concerns with the staff recommendations.**

Perdue questioned the Public Health Preparedness totals in the presentation.

XII. PROPOSED BUDGET ORDINANCE CHANGES

Lawing noted that the ordinance changes are in their provided packets, but that there was not a lot of time to discuss unless the board wanted to do so.

XIII. DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS COMMENTS

Catherine Johnson reviewed her decision package request to add an additional navigator to the Family Justice Center in Greensboro. She noted that we have not added a position to the Greensboro office since 2017. We currently have 2 grant funded positions, HP is answering the Greensboro telephone lines. We are essential just like many other county departments and remained open during the Pandemic and have seen over 2000 clients. The needs for housing, the needs for safety at home looks like during a stay at home order has increased.

Ms. Johnson stated that the request of for a new Navigator position.

Phillips questioned the annual costs.

Johnson stated 60K with salary and benefits. She shared that they would like to hire the position as soon as possible. Traditionally August 1 is the busiest month so that if approved they would like to hire immediate.

Commissioner Cashion noted that her staff have done a tremendous job. She share that on the 15th the program will have served 45 thousand citizens in crisis. She asked how many paid staff the County has and how much partner services are being provided to the community.

Johnson stated that the Greensboro office has 4 staff, and the High Point Office has 3. We have two grant funded positions for elder abuse and child abuse, and we have pulled those grant positions. We have 17 different programs. We have over 75 professionals in Greensboro and 35 in High Point. The combined resource investment is over 5M in professional resource that the public has access to them at no cost.

She noted that we have had less domestic violence homicides in the last 5 years than we did in one year prior to opening the FJC.

Johnson reviewed the Camp Hope Program.

Commissioner Foster followed up with the status of CAMP Home.

She shared that we believe that it is safe. We have made the choice to do Camp Hope this summer based off the recommendations of the Camp program. We will have it in August, and we do feel that we can do that safely.

Alston questioned the reason that we did not include this position in the budget.

Lawing shared that it all goes back to the need and the uncertainty with

Alston made a motion to add the navigator position, seconded by Kay Cashion

Motion carried unanimously, 8:0

ABSENT: Conrad

Phillips thanked Ms. Johnson and her staff for all that they have done.

Alston stated that he appreciates the passion and the commitment that they are providing to this area.

Coleman asked if we are expanding this work to the rural communities and asked if we have numbers in regards to that.

Johnson shared that she does keep zip code data on all that come to the center.

Child Support Director Angela Liverman reviewed the positions requested and granted last year. She stated that year she is seeking funding for the Deputy Director.

She reviewed the position roles and the request. Liverman reviewed the costs of the request. She noted that with any new position we received 66% reimbursement from the State. She noted that the Child Support Department is the 5th largest Department in the County. She noted that we are the only Department without any assistant director position.

Commissioner Perdue questioned additional data related to the performance measures, where they are toward current benchmarks, and performance dollars coming actual versus expected.

He questioned if they have considered reclassifications with existing positions to take a look at reorganization with current positions due to some of the administrative shortfalls that they are having. In regard to the operating costs, is that for equipment for those positions, office space, etc.

Ms Liverman shared that each month they get a report regarding collections they have been at the top for the last 10 or 15 years. She noted that normally they receive between 74 and 75% of

a collection rate. She noted that before COVID they were in line to meet their measures. She stated that last year the Greensboro Office met all their measures.

Commissioner Alston questioned the Manager for the reasons for not granting these positions.

Lawing shared that the reasons are based on the overall revenue fund balance. They are very lean at the top in regard to management at the top. Lawing stated that you can not see all the costs associated with personnel, such as long-term impacts to our insurance claims. There is a bigger picture look that I take when looking at positions.

Alston noted the support of Ms. Liverman and her staff.

Commissioner Alston made a motion to fund those two positions excluding all operation costs October start date; motion seconded by Commissioner Coleman.

Alston spoke in support of the positions.

Commissioner Coleman noted that this is a lean operation, and we are not being asked for much to provide the necessary support to keep the large department moving smoothly.

He shared his experience managing a county department and asked that he would like to review some of these additional requests with more data. He stated that next Tuesday the board meets again, and he asked for more time to consider this information.

Commissioner Cashion spoke in support of the department's request.

Coleman shared that there is no need to delay adding the position and that the additional details can be provided at next week's meeting.

8:0 Motion carried unanimously.

Absent: Justin Conrad

Henning out at 2:42

XIV. OTHER BUSINESS

Lawing reviewed the scheduling of the next work session agenda proposing that it be at 9:30AM on Tuesday June 16, 2020.

Alston asked for an update on the disparity study and a possible cost of that study.

Branson asked for school maintenance and facilities information to be available at the next meeting.

Phillips asked to discuss the Schools COVID-19 relief funds.

Perdue asked if staff could provide more detailed information on the Fire Districts – Salary Disparities between those departments and how their requests would address that.

Branson asked to look at the different Fire Departments across the county in regard to the pay scale and pay equity.

Alston requested a report update on the CARES funds for the Small Business grants. Lawing shared that the county has a zip code report, but we are not tracking MWBE status of the applicants. Alston asked if we could ask the MWBE Director to follow up with those businesses and ask.

Coleman shared that she has looked through the list extensively and the zip code is not a good indicator of the minority status of the business.

Don Campbell shared that the Call Center is now able to take information for individuals who have gotten a denied message. There are employees dedicated to communicating with the applicants directly to correct or understand why.

Coleman stated that the applicant she is aware of, understood why they were denied but they dispute the denial. She asked where they go from there.

Staff shared that they will follow up with Ms. Coleman regarding the situation she is referencing.

Alston questioned the process for those applicants with minor issues.

Campbell stated that we are working IT staff on solutions to some of the more frequent questions and issues. Campbell reviewed some of the limitations in the current work flow process.

The board discussed the small business program.

Alston expressed frustrations over the large number of denials based upon small infractions.

Cashion out at 3:00PM

Alston questioned the percentage of approval of those received thus far.

Lawing shared that he would provide that information,

Branson out at 3:07PM

Lawing noted that the initial data is skewed as result the policy changed after the second day of launch.

The board directed staff to provide additional data.

Commissioner Coleman questioned the roll out of the Nonprofit program.

Deputy County Manager Grier reviewed some of the delays to get the information out and the collaborations with all three agencies. Grier reviewed the timeline for processing of the applications and the review process.

XV. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the adjourned by ominous consent at 3:12pm

Jeffrey M. Phillips, Chairman
Guilford County Board of
Commissioners

Robin B. Keller, Clerk to Board