MINUTES OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF GUILFORD COUNTY
WORK SESSION

Greensboro, North Carolina
November 6, 2025

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed special meeting on November 6, 2025 at 3:30PM., in the Bob Shaw Conference Room located at 201 W. Market Street, Greensboro, North Carolina.

PRESENT: Chairman Melvin "Skip" Alston, presiding; Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster; Commissioners Kay Cashion, Brandon Gray-Hill, Mary Beth Murphy (via virtual communication and entered the meeting at 3:53 p.m.), Carly Cooke, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., and Alan Perdue.

ABSENT: Commissioner Pat Tillman.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Victor Isler; Interim County Attorney Matt Mason; 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; Special Projects Manager Heather Schaffer; Human Resources Director Jaime Joyner; Social Services Director Sharon Barlow; Public Health Director Courtney McFadden; Budget Director Toy Beeninga; Finance Director Don Warn; GCS Deputy Superintendent of Business & Operations Dr. Julius Monk; GCS Chief Financial Officer Tyler Beck; 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 3:36 p.m.

Taking a point of personal privilege, Chairman Alston recognized staff and any elected officials from Guilford County Schools. He invited them to present an overview of matters discussed during the Joint Capital Facilities Board meeting, since tonight's regular agenda includes GCS projects in the New Business Section. He announced amendments to the agenda to add a Guilford County Schools (GCS) item. He recognized County Manager Victor Isler.

County Manager Isler provided an overview of the afternoon's agenda.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. GUILFORD COUNTY COUNTY-WIDE MOBILITY PLAN

County Manager Isler introduced the agenda item. He spoke to funding allocations from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) enabled funds and stakeholder collaborations.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer spoke to transit and the community's need for mobility. She recognized the work of Commissioner Carly Cooke in this effort.

Commissioner Cooke acknowledged staff and spoke to a desire for more collaboration, to the approved pilot programs, and outlined a path forward for next steps.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer spoke to the objectives to include (1) integrating existing transit systems and plans, (2) enhancing service coordination and rider experience, (3) advancing accessible transit and mobility, (4) supporting regional mobility and economic development, (5) establishing a long-term vision with actionable strategies, (6) positioning Guilford County for new funding opportunities, and (7) fostering collaboration across agencies and stakeholders.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer explained the level of engagement to include the following stakeholders: City of Greensboro, City of High Point, Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART), Goodwill, Guilford Community Care Network (GCN), UNC-Chapel Hill, Guilford County Schools, Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTIA), and the NC Department of Transportation (DOT).

Special Projects Manager Schaffer noted the following accomplishments to include (1) establishing Guilford County Transportation Work Group with cross-functional stakeholders, (2) collaborating with partners to identify key transportation challenges, (3) analyzing data shared from partner agencies, (4) developing problem statement across five critical focus areas, (5) generating evidence-based strategy recommendations with prioritization, (6) piloting mobility solutions in identified gaps, and (7) creating a foundation for coordinated countywide transportation planning.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer shared core challenges to include (1) current transit services limit access to transportation for employment for some shift and large workplaces, (2) current transit services limit access to behavioral health and other resources that support vulnerable populations, (3) fleet maintenance and expansion is tied to ridership and reliable transit options, and (4) connecting and enhancing regional mobility.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer noted five (5) critical focus areas to include (1) Workforce & Employment, (2) Human Services (DSS/Justice/Homelessness), (3) Behavioral Health Services, (4) System Infrastructure, and (5) Regional Integration.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer explained transportation stakeholder-prioritized strategies to include (1) developing shared vision and alignment in a unified, countywide approach, (2) online reservation and scheduling system to improve accessibility and planning, (3) comprehensive county and regional services to have seamless connections between municipalities, (4) revisit jurisdictional policies to address barriers at major employment centers, and (5) HopeLink expansion to extend services to crisis intervention and court-ordered mandates.

Commissioner Cooke acknowledged that PART has made efforts in the unified approach with Greensboro and High Point.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer described emerging priorities from transportation stakeholders to include (1) van pool expansion to $2^{nd}/3^{rd}$ shifts with better communication, (2) expanding service during peak times and non-traditional hours, (3) improving amenities at transportation hubs (daycare, food services) (4) making signage user-friendly for diverse populations (DD, ESL, learning impaired), (5) single asset inventory to reduce duplication and improve efficiency, (6) first mile/last mile solutions (micro-transit, employer partnerships), and (7) shared resources around faring and call centers.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer provided an overview of the pilot updates from providers such as Goodwill Rides to Work. She shared that they are actively serving residents to support the workforce. She described how one participant purchased a vehicle post-program graduation. She noted GCN Connection to Care and the GC Sheriff's Office Re-entry Program. She noted that the evaluation work from UNC-Chapel Hill is having early successes. She noted the relationships and communication between partners to identify resources.

Commissioner Murphy entered the meeting at 3:53 p.m.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer noted mobility plan objectives to include (1) integrating existing transit systems and plans, (2) enhancing service coordination and rider experience, (3) advancing accessible transit and mobility, (4) supporting regional mobility and economic development, (5) establishing a long-term vision with actionable strategies, (6) positioning Guilford County for new funding opportunities, and (7) fostering collaboration across agencies and stakeholders.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer explained the Mobility Plan request for proposals (RFP) deliverables developed in collaboration with the work group to include (1) Project administration, management, and coordination, (2) Stakeholder and community engagement, (3) Inventory analysis of existing conditions, (4) Needs assessment and gap analysis, (5) Develop a regional vision, county mobility goals, and evaluation measures, (6) Develop service integration options, (7) Develop an implementation strategy and phased action plan, and (8) Final report and public-facing materials. She noted future community participation and feedback.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer provided an overview of the pilot program budget with remaining funds of $437K.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer noted the following actions for Board consideration: (1) receive the update from the transportation initiative work that has been done thus far, (2) there will be a future ask to use the remaining ARPA funds to support a Countywide Transportation Plan, and (3) planning to solicit an RFP for the Countywide Transportation Plan with a 30-60-day award.

Vice Chairwoman Foster questioned emerging priorities and stakeholder costs.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer confirmed ridership experience feedback to develop an understanding of the total trip cost.

Vice Chairwoman Foster opined that agencies provide bus passes. She questioned the impact of stakeholder costs if free bus passes were provided.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer confirmed addressing that concern with stakeholders.

Commissioner Cashion voiced support for the Mobility Plan. She mentioned having transit between Greensboro and High Point, especially to the Women with Children Residential Recovery Center. She questioned safety issues.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer confirmed that safety was addressed alongside ridership.

Commissioner Cooke spoke to the work group discussion, which included Greensboro-High Point connectivity.

Commissioner Cashion questioned whether a private service was considered.

Commissioner Cooke confirmed that all options are on the table, with a need to expand capacity to gather public input.

Commissioner Perdue echoed Commissioner Cashion’s comments regarding safety on public transit and consideration of vouchers or contracted services. He noted the distance and trip length and questioned whether express trips were considered.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer confirmed that the work group is reviewing pilot group exploration with Uber's help and with tracking data.

Vice Chairwoman Foster shared that High Point established a One High Point Reparation Commission.

Commissioner Cooke confirmed that High Point partners are included in the discussion.

B. GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS BOND PROJECT ORDINANCE REVISIONS

County Manager Isler introduced the agenda item. He recognized GCS Deputy Superintendent of Business & Operations Dr. Julius Monk and GCS Chief Financial Officer Tyler Beck. He reiterated that these items are on the New Business section on tonight’s agenda.

Chairman Alston explained that this information was presented during the last Joint Board meeting. He shared that the entire Board will receive an overview of that presentation now.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Monk provided a bond program update. He spoke to Sternberger’s current activity. He noted an increase in the project ordinance to $56M, which is a budget decrease of $8.6M. He spoke to Allen Jay's request to increase the project ordinance to $70M, which is a budget decrease of $6.5M.

Chief Financial Officer Beck highlighted the deferred capital replacement projects and noted realigning funds due to guaranteed maximum price (GMP) adjustments. He shared that additional capacity in the debt model allows for flexibility to add $50M to deferred capital. He noted that the projects span the district, including HVAC, roof replacements, and other bond-eligible projects. He noted the bond dashboard on the GCS website.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the $14M cost differentials between the two elementary schools.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Monk confirmed Sternberger's square footage and its current enrollment of 531. He highlighted Allen Jay's square footage and its current enrollment of 377, with additional students due to future closures and consolidation.

Commissioner Jones questioned deferred capital and whether the bond line item is identified.

County Manager Isler confirmed that the allocation is a project ordinance based on the bond program. He noted matching funds with the bond and low-risk mechanics with that process.

Budget Director Beeninga spoke to the $2B bond, $500M allocations for capital projects, separate tranches for each school, and budget supplements. He shared that over the last two years, there have been no county funds or cash flow at this point, but they may be needed in the future. He shared data tracking mechanisms.

Commissioner Jones questioned the eligibility designation.

Budget Director Beeninga confirmed joint staff discussions to have an understanding regarding bond eligibility.

Commissioner Jones clarified capital designations as compared to operating or maintenance.

Chief Financial Officer Beck confirmed large replacements and alignment with bond counsel.

Commissioner Jones opined that prior to a bond, we had a capital line item on our annual budget. He urged that we make sure we have alignment on a capital basis when proceeds are spent. He voiced support for being in alignment. He questioned the $15.1M decrease in the budget.

County Manager Isler noted conversations with GCS and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) regarding reduction projections. He spoke to a commitment to work with GCS on our cost model.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Monk highlighted that the summer 2023 budgets were created using an inflation model. He noted that moving forward with 4.2% inflation, we were able to back out the built-in inflation. He shared hope for no dramatic spikes and a continuous evaluation process.

Commissioner Perdue questioned the differences between construction versus project cost, terminology, and definitions.

County Manager Isler confirmed development of templates and definitions, and a statewide records request to allow for itemization for a future board work session.

Budget Director Beeninga identified peer jurisdictions that provided cost comparisons and transparency.

Commissioner Murphy questioned a policy regarding the intention effort for a smaller carbon footprint and the impact of building Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified schools.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Monk confirmed a policy for LEED Silver designation. He noted that there is no cost increase per peer jurisdiction. He shared that GCS is below the expenditure standards. He explained that LEED can save us 30-70% in heating and cooling, which is operational sustainability, where it is feasible. He shared that a life-cycle building analysis reduces our footprint and operational costs (i.e., LED lights, solar panels, Duke Energy rebates, and geothermal HVAC).

Commissioner Jones shared that to preserve relationships and staff alignment, in addition to collaborations on need specifics around LEED cost savings, our constituents are requesting data instead of high-level overviews.

County Manager Isler highlighted staff commitments to drill down into expenses and share Joint Board information. He shared awareness regarding LEED upfront costs.

Commissioner Perdue urged consideration when inquiring into the costs to maintain systems, safety panels, and fire concerns over the life of the building.

Deputy Superintendent Dr. Monk spoke to the surplus Laughlin property and the administrative building for $2.2M. He shared the Town of Summerfield's interest.

Chairman Alston confirmed that the item is on tonight's agenda.

D. UPDATE ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN IMPACTS

Taking a point of personal privilege, Chairman Alston adjusted the agenda to review federal government shutdown impacts.

County Manager Isler introduced this agenda item. He spoke to Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) percentages.

Budget Director Beeninga spoke to information changing daily. He shared that County staff meet on a daily basis. He recognized Budget Manager Haley Matthews, Social Services Director Sharon Barlow, Public Health Director Courtney McFadden, and Special Projects Manager Heather Schaffer.

Budget Manager Matthews noted the objectives to include (1) providing an update on staff approaches to monitoring, (2) providing an update on impacted programs, and (3) discussing funding options for WIC after November 30.

Budget Manager Matthews Haley shared terminology and definitions and explained how the Guilford County government and residents are impacted. She noted that a government shutdown occurs when Congress fails to pass funding bills or a continuing resolution to authorize federal spending. Without that funding, many agencies must suspend nonessential operations. She shared that GC continues to work with the state and local community partners to understand fiscal and operational implications. She noted that reimbursement may be impacted or delayed. She shared that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program are experiencing impacts.

Social Services Director Barlow spoke to SNAP, a federal program that provides monthly benefits to low-income households to buy groceries. She shared that NC DHHS plans to issue benefits at a 35% reduction instead of a 50% reduction. She explained that those receiving small allocations may not receive any benefits, and that benefits will be received at a different timetable than usual. She notified the Board that additional guidance is forthcoming.

Social Services Director Barlow noted that 41,845 households receive SNAP benefits, equating to 85,355 residents with an average household composition of two participants per household. She noted a key takeaway in the past six months is that the average monthly benefits issued is $15.4M per month. She shared that 500 local retailers are impacted.

Social Services Director Barlow shared that County staff supporting this program are 50% reimbursed through federal/state funding. She noted that counties must continue normal operations for SNAP application processing, including expedited service, and complete recertifications during the shutdown.

Social Services Director Barlow clarified that there is sufficient budget authority and cash flow to continue operations until a delayed reimbursement is received.

Commissioner Perdue questioned the cash flow impact if no benefits were received.

County Manager Isler confirmed that we currently have adequate cash flows as the Form 1571 report involves a reimbursement component.

Commissioner Cooke questioned funding sources.

Social Services Director Barlow confirmed the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Vice Chairwoman Foster questioned the benefit receipt timeline.

Social Services Director Barlow confirmed that those benefits have not been paid. She spoke to a recently received directive that does not provide context.

Vice Chairwoman Foster questioned the communication dissemination to households.

Social Services Director Barlow confirmed that the state communicates via calls and texts. She emphasized that this information has not yet been communicated.

Chairman Alston questioned backdated benefits.

Social Services Director Barlow confirmed that residents will receive November benefits and then the formula will be used.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer provides updates from last week's press conference and spoke to pantry support, and to food insecurity. She explained a multidepartment response coordination and key points to include (1) coordinating with key food security partners, (2) supporting local food assistance efforts, (3) data collection (qualitative and quantitative) and analysis, (4) resource awareness, and (5) community information and transparency.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer noted the additional handouts and pamphlets listing pantry partners.

County Manager Isler added that the initiative includes affiliates to close gaps monthly. He noted $15M gap fillers to include volunteer opportunities, a Give Campaign, in-kind donations, and a support network. He spoke to further leveraging wholesalers.

Chairman Alston highlighted the GC website for more information.

Special Projects Manager Schaffer confirmed working with the Communications Team to update the Food Finder app and spoke to a GIS map.

Chairman Alston commended staff for their quick response during this crisis.

Public Health Director McFadden noted the WIC Program provides healthy foods, breastfeeding support, and nutrition education to 13,670 pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age five. She noted that monthly WIC benefits received by GC residents total ~$1.2M. She shared that there are sufficient state funds to continue WIC operations through November 30. She emphasized that no services or appointments will be canceled.

Public Health Director McFadden shared that staff are 100% reimbursed through federal and state funding and no county dollars are used. She noted that $400K in additional federal Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) funding has been identified that could be used to support WIC positions for six weeks. She spoke to impacted staff positions.

Commissioner Murphy questioned staff salaries and position reassignment.

Public Health Director McFadden confirmed a realignment of staff after November 30 to other Public Health functions.

Vice Chairwoman Foster shared a personal account of someone impacted by WIC reductions at the grocery store.

Budget Manager Matthews spoke to other programs not impacted by the government shutdown. She noted Adult Day Care and In-Home Aid Services, Medicaid Administration, and Adult and Child Protective Services. She outlined the scope of program impacts funding timeline.

C. GUILFORD COUNTY FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE POLICY DISCUSSION

County Manager Isler requested the Board to receive a report on flexible workplace, and recommended the Board to direct staff to amend existing regulations for Board approval and authorize the Manager to develop and implement relevant flexible workplace operational policies, rules, and guidelines. He shared a pilot program with Child Support and HR. He noted the draft guidelines provided. He explained the current and future space considerations and an upcoming action plan. He explained that this will be a two-part presentation with the remainder brought to a future work session.

HR Director Joyner shared the objectives to include (1) context and background, (2) development of model, (3) current state, (4) standards and definitions, (5) comparative insights, (6) discussion, and (7) next steps.

HR Director Joyner spoke to a strategic focus area to improve surface delivery and employee well-being prior to the pandemic. She shared that DSS was a pilot program, and noted that HR, IT and EMS collaborated to resolve data and system integration issues in SimpliGov. She shared that it expanded to Child Support Services and HR.

HR Director Joyner shared the merits of the flexible workplace model to include (1) operational continuity and resilience, (2) productivity and effectiveness, (3) employee engagement and retention, (4) talent acquisition, and (5) space efficiency and fiscal stewardship.

HR Director Joyner highlighted professional workplace standards and general expectations to cover attendance, meeting attendance, task completion and accountability, supervisor oversight, professional presence, and on-site coverage expectations.

HR Director Joyner gave an overview of proposed work location categories and definitions to include onsite-agency stationed, onsite-satellite stationed, onsite-hybrid eligible, remote, and field-based.

HR Director Joyner shared peer government benchmarks and policies from Durham County, the City of Raleigh, Wake County, and the City of Greensboro. She concluded the presentation with a pie chart depicting a 2025 data profile.

Vice Chairwoman Foster confirmed an additional presentation at a future work session.

Chairman Alston questioned time sensitivity.

County Manager Isler confirmed pushing our timeline regarding space decisions.

Commissioner Cooke commended staff on developing a framework. She voiced support of the flexible work options and to move forward with recommendations.

Commissioner Perdue clarified whether staff guidance was needed for the Board to make a decision at the next work session.

County Manager Isler noted that his statutory duty is to create alignment for future years, and the Board’s responsibility regarding policy and regulations is for a work hours amendment along with a review of program design.

Commissioner Cashion requested more time to review major policy changes. She voiced support giving the manager authority to develop policy for Board review, but felt that this process was rushed.

Interim County Attorney Matt Mason advised that the requested action directs the County Manager to develop and implement policy, whereas the Board reviews any amendments to the personnel regulations to framework alignment with flexible work. He emphasized that the County Manager cannot implement a policy that conflicts with current regulations.

Commissioner Murphy expressed trust in the Manager to run the county with 3000 employees. She voiced support for a grant of authority to the Manager to engage in direct communication with Directors to move the organization forward.

Commissioner Perdue clarified that what is missing is structure and this policy provides a framework for stability.

Commissioner Cooke echoed sentiments that this is a tightening up of the current structure. She spoke to the management team wanting to implement responsibility, oversight, and customer service with the proposed changes.

County Manager Isler confirmed that flexible workplace processes are already in place.

Motion made by Commissioner Alan Perdue, seconded by Commissioner Carly Cooke, to direct staff to amend existing regulations for Board approval and authorize the Manager to develop and implement relevant flexible workplace operational policies, rules, and guidelines, with any impacted HR regulations to be presented to the Board for further review and consideration.

VOTE:	**Motion carried 7 - 1**
AYES:	**Melvin "Skip" Alston, J. Carlvena Foster, Alan Perdue, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Carly Cooke, Mary Beth Murphy, Brandon Gray-Hill**
NOES:	**Commissioner Kay Cashion**

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for this agenda.

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:30 p.m.

Melvin “Skip” Alston
Chairman

Robin Keller
Clerk