

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

Greensboro, North Carolina
March 6, 2025

PRESENT: Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston, presiding; Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster; Commissioners Kay Cashion, Brandon Gray-Hill, Carly Cooke, Mary Beth Murphy, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., and Alan Perdue.

ABSENT: Commissioner Pat Tillman.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Michael Halford; County Attorney Andrea Leslie-Fite; Deputy Clerk to the Board Ariane Webb, Deputy Clerk to the Board T’ebony Rosa; Jason Jones, Assistant County Manager; Erris Dunston, Assistant County Manager; Toy Beeninga, Budget and Management Director; Sheriff Danny Rogers, Sheriff’s Office; Jim Albright, Emergency Services Director; Jorge Ortega, Animal Services Director; Vincent Daugherty, Security 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 3:35 p.m.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY 2025-26 BUDGETPLANNING PROCESSES DISCUSSION

Chairman Alston introduced the agenda item and recognized County Manager Michael Halford.

Halford provided an overview of the FY25-26 budget. He acknowledged a Service Inventory document to coincide with the recent National Association of Counties (NACo) conference and budget considerations. He referenced pages 1-4 to highlight various departmental mandated and nonmandated services. He described \$69M federal government allocations for Health and Human Services, a \$3.2M debt service fund from federal subsidies, and grant funds in the amount of \$6.6M. He spoke to a \$80M total in federal dollars. He referenced pages 5-7 that outlined approximately \$21M in federal dollars allocated to the state. He noted approximately \$100M in funding between the two (2) sources. He cautioned about the potential impacts to state level funding. He expressed appreciation to the budget and finance teams.

Commissioner Cooke opined if revoked or removed funding is tied to specific programs and/or positions.

Halford confirmed that if any program or position goes away, staff would go back to the Board to make that determination.

Commissioner Cooke questioned potential Executive Orders and policy changes to the services we already have.

Halford pondered whether the elimination of funding also removes responsibility. He noted previous Medicaid changes triggered county dollars by using sales taxes to cover the program. He opined that the future may require hire payout responsibilities.

Commissioner Jones questioned the scope of indirect funding that flows through the state.

Halford noted that the Department of Health and Human Services may be 80% pass-through.

Chairman Alston shared that it is a daily moving target. **He requested staff to relay any changes in the funding stream.**

Halford confirmed forwarding any new bills from the NC General Assembly regarding leveraging sales taxes.

Commissioner Jones questioned whether the county owned any properties subject to closing.

Halford confirmed that nothing was showing up on the radar, other than some US Department of Agriculture (USDA) space.

Halford continued the presentation and recognized goal timelines for FY26 budget requests for Board review. He spoke to a continued discussion regarding Board guidance on key components on merit, general funds, the school bond model, community-based organizations (CBOs), and Fire Districts analysis. He spoke to Board shared interests in county dollars, with \$12M in extra funding.

Commissioner Gray-Hill entered the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

The presentation continued with discussions on FY26 departmental budget requests.

1. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Halford recognized Sheriff Danny Rogers.

Rogers shared budget concerns regarding salaries, medical expenses, and training. He shared that the Guilford County Sheriff's Office continues to serve its residents. He spoke to law enforcement vehicle prices and requested approximately \$2.8M in funding. He shared expenses to include \$1.7M armory needs and \$1.2M in vehicle repair. He acknowledged the staff present.

Captain Wes Mecham shared the over \$800K vehicle replacement plan to replace aging vehicles due to high mileage and age. He shared technology needs of \$560K to cover body-worn cameras (BWC) and docking stations.

Captain Nathan Triche highlighted the approximate \$250K handgun replacement.

Business Manager Heath Guy shared additional funding requests for the medical contract, replacing Windows 10 computers, replacing data management systems, mobile command center replacement, crime center software support, conversion of scanner lease, and equipment truck replacement.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the mobile command center status.

Guy confirmed the mobile command center is a large bus used for call-out events to allow law enforcement to stay warm or conduct investigative work. He noted that the current bus is inoperative and parked.

Sheriff Rogers recalled an account of a homicide event where the mobile command center allows for onsite workspace. He shared that the current post is over twenty-five (25) years old, and we may have to request the Greensboro Police Department's (GPD) mobile unit. He noted that we are looking for one to use for another fifteen (15) to twenty (20) years.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the listed items to include the number of units needing software replacement.

Captain Mecham confirmed we must be Criminal Justice Information Service (CJIS) compliant to conduct law enforcement work. He described that these are the mobile units inside the patrol vehicles and at our desks. He noted that the Windows patch does not work without it.

Guy confirmed 330 machines needing software replacement.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the conversion process.

Guy confirmed that this is a several month process, and that we already put up good-faith money for the conversion.

Captain Mecham explained that the Central Square vendor ceased system updates, because the system has been outdated for the past several years. He emphasized that we must upgrade to a new system to be compatible. He noted that the request for proposals (RFP) is only good for ninety (90) days. He explained that if they do not have 1/3 of the upfront costs, the vendor does not want to start the project.

Vice Chairwoman Foster entered the meeting at 4:01 p.m.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the scanner expense and requested item prioritizing.

Sheriff Rogers reiterated there are sixteen (16) requests and expressed discomfort selecting only a few.

Commissioner Jones questioned whether some of these items can be capitalized and maybe some future allocations over the next few years.

Commissioner Murphy entered the meeting at 4:02 p.m.

Halford confirmed there must be available funds prior to allocating. He shared that there are different types of funds such as capital funds.

Guy confirmed that the \$425K in Wellpath funds have already been spent.

Captain Mecham continued the presentation and requested \$200K additional funding for vehicle mechanical repair, \$123K for smart portable radios, and \$75K for the re-entry program.

Chairman Alston left the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Sheriff Rogers shared that the smart technology is needed to replace outdated radios. He noted safety issues in law enforcement.

Dr. LaKisha Ellison, Sheriff's Office Behavioral Health and Wellness Coordinator, spoke to four (4) case managers currently serving 1100 clients. She described being short staffed; five (5) staff members operate two (2) different programs at separate facilities. She explained the additional \$75K are to assist justice-involved families with children.

Chairman Alston entered the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

Captain Triche continued the presentation and spoke to \$45K for training events.

First Lieutenant Eric Gordon spoke to \$76K for evidence vault rolling shelves to add to the current storage.

Sheriff Rogers confirmed this would be a long-term fix as we outgrew the current location due to caseloads.

Captain Triche spoke to filling all vacancies with \$300K for training detention staff and \$100K for law enforcement training due to attrition and retirements, and \$250K for sworn Deputy Sheriffs.

2. EMERGENCY SERVICES

Halford recognized Emergency Services Director Jim Albright.

Albright presented an overarching theme of “Standards, Staff, and Stuff.” He requested funding increases regarding resources to include \$2.8M in vehicle replacements for ambulances, sports utility vehicles (SUVs), and remounting three (3) existing boxes. He spoke to a high level of customer service for Guilford County residents and the need to cover a large square footage. He noted staff and system shortages and unit hour utilization. He spoke to extending equipment such as radios and cardiac monitors are beyond end of service life.

Chairman Alston left the meeting at 4:12 p.m.

Albright spoke to \$253K for patient care mobile tablet replacements, transmitters, and technology needs. He spoke to the \$1.95M replacement for cardiac monitors, pacemakers, defibrillators, breathing apparatus, and smart features on radios.

Halford questioned the 60th percentile impact.

Albright confirmed prioritized personnel due to taxing staff and attrition to decrease workload and worker’s compensation. He explained competition from emergency rooms, hospital-at-home industry, and paramedics. He mentioned a recent emergency department assault in an uncontrolled environment.

Albright noted \$1.6M for phasing in positions and \$103K for an Emergency Services Training (EST) Coordinator. He shared the progression of EMT academies.

Commissioner Perdue questioned personnel needs and requested position clarification.

Albright confirmed one (1) to two (2) full-time employees (FTEs), eight (8) people to be present and two (2) to cover absences; four (4) units on twelve (12) hours is desirable.

3. ANIMAL SERVICES

Animal Services Director Jorge Ortega shared the number of animals serviced along with the number of volunteer hours, transfers to other facilities, and foster care statistics. He requested additional staffing as each animal that comes in has a human interaction. He requested eight (8) additional positions to include Specialists, Cleaning Techs, Receptionists, and Foster Rescue Administrator and \$100K for part-time funding. He emphasized that these positions handle multiple duties. He stressed the need to not euthanize.

Chairman Alston entered the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

Halford spoke to mandated and nonmandated services to include rabies isolation along with keeping people and pets together. He referred to a chart on slide 12 (Animal Services) and being flexible with column entries per Board approval.

4. SECURITY

Security Director Vincent Daugherty shared the requested priority needs to include \$187K for thirty-four (34) AXON taser replacement due to end of life. He noted that this is the same non-lethal model as the GC Sheriff's Office. He shared experiences with pepper spray deployment.

Vincent noted \$450K for security enhancements and assessments to alleviate service gaps at county facilities. He shared dialogue regarding turnover issues and offering benefits as a long-term solution to fill twenty-four (24) positions.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the number of positions.

Vincent confirmed twenty-four (24) additional positions at full time to replace our current contracted positions for a full year.

Budget Director Toy Beeninga confirmed that the \$1.8M contract would cease and be replaced with \$1.3M in full-time positions.

Chairman Alston questioned the number of contracted employees.

Vincent confirmed the contract is at thirty (30) but we currently have twenty-four (24) positions.

Chairman Alston questioned annual contract increases.

Vincent confirmed 3-5% annual increases.

Chairman Alston questioned contract renewal terms.

Vincent confirmed that pay increases are built into the contract renewal, and with benefits, it results in an increase.

Beeninga confirmed a \$75K renewal expense.

Halford confirmed providing actual figures with \$15/hour compensation.

Chairman Alston questioned the number of armed security officers.

Vincent confirmed there is a mixture of armed and unarmed officers.

Chairman Alston questioned having thirty (30) officers on a daily basis.

Vincent confirmed.

Chairman Alston questioned actual employment figures.

Vincent confirmed the current total of thirty-four (34) in-house along with a contract of twenty-four (24) positions which is a shortage.

Commissioner Cooke questioned compensation for twenty-four (24) or thirty (30) positions.

Vincent confirmed twenty-four (24).

Commissioner Perdue questioned the expansion for mental health and other department coverage.

Vincent confirmed.

Vice Chairwoman Foster questioned the anticipation of filling thirty (30) positions.

Vincent confirmed anticipating twenty-four (24) positions. He shared a desire to cover the screening stations and courthouses.

Chairman Alston questioned Board meeting coverage.

Vincent confirmed in-house staff for meetings, but contracted employees for entrances. He shared there is a mixture to include the Sheriff's Office.

Halford suggested discussing security issues in closed session.

Halford continued the presentation by introducing items for Board feedback and noted condensed sheets in the back of the information packet for Board review. He spoke to a \$2.7M March 2026 merit date and compensation not derived from fund balance.

There was Board consensus for maintaining the merit system and for the March 2026 date.

Halford noted \$2.6M for pay plan maintenance. He shared that we used some of these funds for Sheriff Office improvements. He requested guidance on adding the \$2M back in.

Chairman Alston requested additional clarification and questioned past behavior.

Halford noted pay ranges for a given year and no pay adjustments for several years to align with the market. He explained the rationale of pay structures to bring positions into market alignment. He highlighted flexibility and Board approval as this fund was used to fund Sheriff position increases.

Commissioner Cooke questioned budgeting for Sheriff pay raises.

Halford confirmed the Board created a renewing fund stream.

Commissioner Cooke noted that this is not a new concept. She shared Board support for employee compensation. She suggested future prioritization after looking at the big picture.

Halford confirmed that it is based on Board approval.

Chairman Alston suggested the Board take the pay plan maintenance into consideration and review the budget as a whole to discuss these other categories.

There was Board consensus.

Halford noted the school bond model and recognized Budget Director Toy Beeninga to run a demo.

Beeninga provided a real-time demo of the school bond model over the next couple of years in collaboration with the Finance Department. He shared comprehensive fiscal year impacts to capital funds, revenue available, proposed debt service, property taxes, Honor School capital, sales tax, lottery proceeds, existing bond premiums, and interest earnings. He noted a \$76M set aside in anticipation of debt service payments. He shared that the red figures indicate a fund draw-down. He stated that the model outperformed issuances due to market timing. He demonstrated market assumptions with compounded interest.

Commissioner Jones questioned surpluses without interest earnings.

Beeninga confirmed that this is held back in the model as a cushion. He stated that we can model investment earnings. He noted that we currently have money in the bank. He reversed the model for additional demonstration and noted that as the schools spend down, the pot is decreased. He shared consideration of built-in arbitrage calculations.

Halford suggested that interest could pay down debt service and bond-eligible school projects.

Commissioner Jones requested interest clarification.

Beeninga spoke to a June 30th calculation of \$4-5M in interest. He spoke to a policy dial of interest or already available interest in the bank.

Commissioner Cooke spoke to the model's helpfulness as we are exploring different options with demo adjustments. She requested to change the property tax allocation in the demo.

Beeninga decreased \$34M to \$20M figures in the demo spreadsheet.

Commissioner Cooke questioned any risks to decreasing the amount as non-recurring. She opined whether there are options since we are hearing a lot of service replacement requests. She questioned one-time adjustment impacts to the model with property taxes.

Halford confirmed it could be a limited risk but consider the political climate. He emphasized that if you use the set-aside, it triggers a risk with the Local Government Commission (LGC). He shared that we have a two (2) year cycle for credit rating assessments, and we would have to explain a one-time expense and not reoccurring for our bond rating.

Commissioner Jones requested another financial assumption in the demo.

Beeninga confirmed property tax and growth.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the property tax adjustment in the demo model.

Beeninga confirmed that property tax growth at 2-2.8% is a conservative estimate.

Halford reiterated a confirmation of using interest and consideration of one-time usage.

There was Board consensus.

Halford spoke to slide 19 (Fiscal Year 2026 CBO Process) and noted 191 applications, a 7% increase from last year, with 64% of applicants receiving funding last year. He requested procedural protocols going forward.

Commissioner Perdue requested adding quadrant use to align with daily requirements.

Commissioner Jones requested CBO division into categories.

Chairman Alston questioned the CBO application cut-off date.

Halford confirmed February 28th and reviewing the applications for compliance.

Commissioner Murphy suggested adding another column to the spreadsheet to allow for non/mandated services alignment.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for this agenda.

IV. ADJOURN

Motion made by Commissioner Alan Perdue, seconded by Vice Chairwoman Foster, to adjourn the meeting.

There being no further business the work session was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chairman

Robin Keller
Clerk