

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF GUILFORD COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS' ANNUAL RETREAT**

Greensboro, North Carolina  
February 2-3, 2023  
Day Two – February 3, 2023

*The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed regular meeting on February 3, 2023 at 8:30 AM for the Board's Annual Retreat held at the Bur-Mil Clubhouse, 5834 Bur-Mil Club Road, Greensboro, NC.*

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

**ABSENT:** Commissioners Pat Tillman and James Upchurch.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Michael Halford, County Manager; Andrea Leslie-Fite County Attorney; Jason Jones, Assistant County Manager; Erris Dunston, Assistant County Manager; Victor Isler, Assistant County Manager; Robin Keller, Clerk to Board; Janet Carlson, Retreat Facilitator; members of the community, staff and media.

**I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston welcomed those present and the Board reconvened its Annual Retreat at 8:51AM.

Janet Carlson, Retreat Facilitator, offered a brief recap of the ideas generated from the small group and priorities discussions.

The Board discussed which activities most resonated with them and expressed general consensus that their small group discussions with department directors was most valuable.

Commissioner Alan Perdue spoke to the value of learning how they, as elected officials, can help staff.

Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster spoke to the work of the departments, along with their successes and challenges. She shared she enjoyed the diversity training and the open dialogue of the community priority discussions.

Commissioner Frankie T. Jones, Jr. stated the discussions on identifying qualitative and quantitative metrics should be considered further, as they could provide the Board with greater alignment on certain topics.

## **II. NEW BUSINESS & LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

### **a. Memorandum of Agreement: Hazard Mitigation Property Acquisition**

Steven Grose, Emergency Management Director, introduced the item.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Alan Perdue, and seconded by Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster, to authorize the designated agent (Rachel Faucette, Guilford County Emergency Management Coordinator) to sign the attached memorandum of agreement (MOA), in substantial form, and authorize the County to carry out the terms of the MOA, through staff, to implement hazard mitigation project #4393-0046-R, including acquisition of one (1) or both of the parcels located at 6100 Bellflower Road (parcel ID 101246) and 6102 Bellflower Road (parcel ID 101249) with required deed restrictions, and the execution of related documents.**

**VOTE: Motion carried 7 - 0**

**AYES: Melvin "Skip" Alston, J. Carlvena Foster, Mary Beth Murphy, Carly Cooke, Kay Cashion, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Alan Perdue**

**NOES: None**

**ABSENT: Pat Tillman, James Upchurch**

### **b. Design Build Contract Award – Waterproofing and Building Envelope**

Eric Hilton, Facilities & Property Management Director, introduced the item and shared the request for proposals (RFP) process was completed and WxProofing was selected as the vendor. He shared they are capping the project at a not-to-exceed amount and will prioritize its scope to ensure they remain within costs. Hilton discussed the facility that would be addressed through the project.

Vice Chair Foster questioned if the project would address ongoing water issues in the High Point Courthouse.

Hilton stated they addressed water intrusion resulting from skylight issues a few years ago and recently managed sprinkler and plumbing issues.

Halford clarified this project will address ongoing piping issues in the Courthouse, along with water leakage in the plaza area.

Chairman Alston questioned if the project was bid out.

Hilton noted a qualifications-based process was used and the prime contractor submitted sub-contractors that were vetted by a team of staff. He confirmed the MWBE Program Director verified their best efforts.

Chairman Alston requested a breakdown of the MWBE participation.

Commissioner Jones noted this information was available on pg. 28 of the bid response packet.

Shaunne Thomas, MWBE Program Director confirmed staff requested WxProofing conduct a second attempt to recruit African-American subcontractors, and noted the vendor can be required to confirm they will comply with a certain amount of minority participation. She noted staff will monitor to ensure they meet this goal and shared the recently implemented supplier diversity software will allow them to track the current and anticipated amount of participation during construction.

Chairman Alston questioned the status of this software.

Thomas anticipated purchasing it this month and implementation within a reasonable amount of time.

**Motion was made by Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster, and seconded by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, to approve a not-to-exceed design-build contract, in substantial form, with WxProofing in the amount of \$6,751,000, which includes all investigation, design, construction and project delivery costs; and authorize staff to take all necessary measures to execute the contract.**

**VOTE: Motion carried 7 - 0**  
**AYES: Melvin "Skip" Alston, J. Carlvena Foster, Mary Beth Murphy, Carly Cooke, Kay Cashion, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Alan Perdue**  
**NOES: None**  
**ABSENT: Pat Tillman, James Upchurch**

### **c. Review Proposed legislative Goals**

Robin Keller, Clerk to Board, introduced the item and referenced the proposed goals for 2023. She discussed how to recruit legislative support for the items.

#### **1. Local Government Workforce Flexibility**

Jim Albright, Emergency Services Director, introduced the goal and spoke to the lack of resilience within the local government workforce. He discussed challenges associated with the 1,000-hour cap on retiree work schedules, which limited them from returning to fill administrative positions that would allow active, full-time employees to remain in the field.

Deputy Chief Vic Maynard, Sheriff's Office, spoke to the value of retiree callbacks in the Bailiff, Student Resource Officer (SRO) and Detention divisions, and the level of expertise, seniority and skills they offer in these areas. He encouraged the Board to lobby for this goal at the state-level, and noted this is a need, not a want.

Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy questioned the goal for this legislation.

Albright stated the elimination of the 1,000-hour cap is the ultimate goal.

Commissioner Murphy requested the goal language updated to include "significantly extend or remove" the 1,000-hour cap.

Albright clarified the language should indicate "removal" of the 1,000-hour cap.

Commissioner Carly Cooke stated this goal should encompass all the departments who could benefit from this change in order to strengthen the request.

Commissioner Jones questioned opportunities to work with other organizations statewide to achieve this goal.

Albright confirmed this is a statewide goal and discussed potential opportunities to vet this through the NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC).

Commissioner Perdue offered language that would capture the goal to include removal of all regulations related to workforce flexibility.

Commissioner Kay Cashion noted the NCACC has already developed and presented its 2023 legislative agenda and questioned if the intent was to discuss the goal with the Guilford Legislative Delegation for possible sponsorship during the late summer session.

Albright noted the NCACC typically focuses on offering broad, statewide legislative goals and confirmed staff are not seeking to include this on their agenda but to receive feedback.

Commissioner Cashion shared that, if approved, she would be happy to introduce the goal to the NCACC as it addresses a statewide concern.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the intent of meeting with the Guilford delegation to discuss goals.

Keller stated the purpose for today's discussion was to identify the priority legislative goals from staff and then expedite a meeting with the Guilford delegation in order to introduce these items.

Commissioner Cooke questioned if it would be best to discuss these during a work session in the fall and then introduce the goals to the delegation.

Chairman Alston agreed and spoke to the potential to receive support from other organizations throughout the state.

Keller shared the deadlines to submit bills to the NC General Assembly (NCGA).

Commissioner Cashion noted workforce flexibility goal could be of interest to the State Treasurer's Board of Trustees, who could discuss and then present to the General Assembly.

Commissioner Perdue stated it may be of benefit to research if these goals are governed by administrative rules or legislative bills.

Maynard shared the NC Sheriff's Association has discussed this goal many times and is in full support.

Keller stated that, if it is the consensus of the Board, additional staff can be allocated to research and share these requests with the local delegation within the next two (2) weeks.

## 2. Increase Income Threshold for Elderly or Disabled

Ben Chavis, Tax Director, introduced the goal and shared this is a statewide problem impacting elderly and disabled citizens who do not qualify for the tax homestead exclusion. He noted the income threshold of \$33,800 is too low and should be re-evaluated. Chavis stated three (3) jurisdictions have taken local action to address the issue, but believes the income eligibility should be addressed at the state level.

Commissioner Jones shared he and Chavis have discussed this issue extensively, especially during the County's recent reappraisal.

Commissioner Murphy echoed Commissioner Jones' comments and questioned if there was a recent evaluation of the income limits.

Chavis clarified the most recent adjustment was based on a cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA), which only increased by income requirements by \$8,800 and noted these increases are based on Social Security Administration (SSA) increases.

Keller reiterated the income limits are based on SSA increases and the request is to tie this legislative to Housing & Urban Development (HUD) income guidelines. She noted this would be considered a statutory amendment under purview of the General Assembly.

Chavis stated the statute needs to allow flexibility for each county to adjust income guidelines, based on the needs of the community and confirmed additional language is required in order to craft the legislation.

Keller noted that if the Board is interested in moving forward with these goals staff will work with the Legal department to craft legislation to present to the Guilford delegation.

Chairman Alston questioned how the program would be administered and who would determine income thresholds, if this legislation is passed.

Chavis confirmed this is why they are seeking a statutory amendment, in order to have a basis for local administration.

Commissioner Cooke spoke to potential legal issues with local evaluations of this rule and questioned grant options for the exclusion.

Andrea Leslie-Fite, County Attorney, spoke to the need to still move forward with a legislative bill to avoid legal challenges, as there is no legal authority for a grant process in the statutes.

Commissioner Cashion requested clarification of the exclusion.

Chavis summarized the exclusion requirements and noted if they are met, the citizen is allowed an exclusion of \$25,000 of the tax value, or up to one-half of assessed value of the property.

Keller confirmed with the Board that there was interest in pursuing the statutory change and a local bill related to grant opportunities for the exclusion.

### 3. Local Health Department Accreditation

Dr. Iulia Vann, DHHS-Public Health Division Director, expressed her support for the Local Government Workforce Flexibility legislation. She introduced the item and noted accreditation establishes a uniform standard across health departments statewide.

Dr. Vann stated NC was the first state to require accreditation in 2005 and confirmed this goal is requesting a general statute modification to change this process from a 4-year to a 5-year cycle. She shared the 5-year cycle was granted during the pandemic but has been lifted.

Dr. Vann noted the ten (10) essential functions of Public Health have been modified to include 21<sup>st</sup> century core values and these need to be updated within the statutes. Vann shared the NC accreditation process needs to be aligned with the national process, which allows them flexibility to seek accreditation through NC or the national board. She shared only two (2) counties in NC have undergone the national accreditation.

Commissioner Cashion questioned which counties and Dr. Vann stated Cabarrus Alliance and Burke County have been accredited through the national process.

Commissioner Cooke questioned if there were any conversations with the state agency.

Dr. Vann confirmed their two (2) primary associations have continued these conversations with NC DHHS and noted the majority of the Public Health professionals are in agreement with regards to accreditation flexibility.

Commissioner Cooke spoke to the importance of getting DHHS on board prior to introducing changes.

Keller noted this year's legislative goals are much more innovative and visionary, which would continue to set Guilford County apart as a state leader.

Chairman Alston requested more detailed information related to these requests prior to introducing to the goals to the Guilford delegation.

#### 4. Medicaid Expansion

Sharon Barlow, DHHS-Social Services Division Director, introduced the item and noted the goal is to advocate a 6-month start-up time prior to the Medicaid expansion start date, including match funding from state for equipment and staff training, along with amendments to hold the county harmless in reporting requirements during the first year of expansion. She noted the state DSS Directors Association is very involved in this request.

Barlow expressed her support for the Local Government Workforce Flexibility goal.

#### 5. Adult Protective Services State Funding Increases

Barlow requested the Board's support to advocate for increased funding for Adult Protective Services (APS) programs, which are currently underfunded.

#### 6. Family Justice Center / Victims' Rights

Barlow discussed the goal to promote the Guilford Family Justice Center (FJC) model as a best practice for cohesive services.

#### 7. Family Justice Center / Adult Protective Services

Barlow reviewed the request to seek legislation to establish elder abuse protection and fatality review teams, including establishing multi-disciplinary teams that allow them to work together to protect elders and confirmed legislation has been drafted by the Legal team.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to the critical nature of elder abuse at a national level and encouraged the Board to focus on this issue.

Commissioner Jones questioned if the review teams would be at the local or state level.

Barlow shared this team would be at the local level, but defined in statutes and monitored by the state, similar to Child Protective Services (CPS) teams.

Commissioner Jones questioned if the goal includes a request for state funding.

Barlow confirmed and noted matching county funds would also be included.

Commissioner Cooke expressed her interest in learning the status of the Board's 2022 Legislative Priorities and if the goal to amend the 50B domestic violence protective order legislation was successful.

Barlow stated she is unsure of its status, but would provide information to the Board.

Commissioner Cooke noted it may be of benefit to include legislative items that did not move forward last year on 2023 list. She questioned the status of legislation designed to increase Juvenile Detention subsidy rates, based upon Raise the Age laws.

Victor Isler, Assistant County Manager, shared they have worked with the NC Department of Juvenile Justice on a memorandum of agreement and with our Budget department to develop a cost-rate model, which allowed them to obtain an enhanced subsidy rate.

Commissioner Cooke requested Doug Logan share his challenges related to the Raise the Age legislation, including staffing issues.

Doug Logan, Juvenile Detention Director, confirmed his team has experienced more violent behavior since older juveniles have been introduced to the system. He noted they are no longer able to utilize the 1:8 staff to juvenile ratio, and are now utilizing a 2:5 ratio to manage detainees. He spoke to challenges related to retention and spoke to addressing these challenges with unarmed defense measures in order to control challenging youth.

Commissioner Cooke encouraged them to determine if they need the Board to provide additional advocacy.

Commissioner Cashion reminded the Board of the quarter-cent sales tax language option, which was passed by the House, but stalled in the Senate. She encouraged the Board to continue advocating for this item.

Chairman Alston requested staff evaluate last year's goals and include those that were unsuccessful on this year's list.

Commissioner Cooke spoke to Universal Pre-K item.

Commissioner Jones introduced potential legislation related to Bingham Park and environmental health issues that may make it onto the City of Greensboro's legislative goals list. He noted this could possibly be extended to a County legislative item.

Chairman Alston encouraged staff to contact the Guilford delegation within the next week regarding a meeting and requested they work quickly to get detailed items to the Board.

Halford referenced Pleasant Garden's request for funds to support water/sewer projects and spoke to the potential to allocate state funds towards this need. He noted the County's potential role as a pass-through for this funding.

Chairman Alston spoke to the possibility of requesting federal funding for some of these legislative goals, specifically those related to behavioral and mental health services, and drug rehabilitation services.

Commissioner Perdue noted the 16-bed limitation is a major hurdle facing urban counties and stated this is a federal requirement that should be included in our legislative goals.

Keller confirmed staff would work to provide additional information on these goals and will then have them ready for Board review.

### **III. FY 2023 PRIORITY: DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENT BH/SA CASE MANAGEMENT FOR HIGH-SERVICE USERS**

Halford discussed behavioral health initiatives staff have worked on since April 2022.

Isler introduced the item and noted the purpose of this discussion is to dig deeper into behavioral health service delivery in order to enhance our understanding of the gaps in services that are offered in Guilford County.

Isler introduced Tara Larson, with Cansler Collaborative Resources, who would serve as the facilitator to assist the County in working through the health and human services consolidation.

Anthony Ward, CEO of Sandhills Center LME/MCO, offered a historical perspective of behavioral health services management in Guilford County and the state. He discussed how services were managed prior to the divestiture in 2001 and the impact of Sandhills taking on management in 2012.

Ward discussed implementation of tailored plans and the Sandhills Center catchment area. He defined the 1915 (b)(c) Medicaid waiver as a rule that waives certain provisions of section 1915 (b) and (c) of the Social Security Act, including statewide uniformity of rates. Ward noted this capitated, managed care system is the vehicle for service provision to Medicaid recipients.

Ward provided an update on Guilford County members served by fiscal year and noted the total amount of services received during the last fiscal year was over \$178 million. He stated Guilford County contributes approximately \$9.158 million to this amount, which is the most flexible pot of funding they have available. Ward confirmed state funds are somewhat flexible and allow them to purchase certain services solely to reimburse staff time.

Ward reviewed the most frequent behavioral health services received during last fiscal year:

- Innovations Services
- Intermediate Care Facilities
- Outpatient Services
- Behavioral Health Long Term Residential
- Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities
- Inpatient Hospitalization

- Assertive Community Treatment Team
- 1915 (b) (3) Services

Chairman Alston questioned if the overall amount of funding received by Guilford County could be tracked and broken down by federal, state and local dollars for residents.

Commissioner Murphy questioned eligibility requirements to receive access to Innovations Services.

Ward stated these slots are capped annually and the General Assembly increases the number available by adding approximately 1,000 statewide spots each year. He shared they maintain a registry of those with unmet needs and noted an individual must have a physiological evaluation and be eligible to enter an intermediate care facility to advance through the list. Ward confirmed that, while on the waiting list, individuals are provided certain traditional services.

Isler stated the consultant will work on asset mapping.

Larson confirmed their work will also include developing a registry of unmet needs and spoke to the recent settlement agreement involving this registry and resulting action that should be conducted by the General Assembly during this session.

Larson shared there is a new option 1915 (i) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those with substance abuse issues for mental health services, such as supportive employment and respite care, that could not be accessed without a waiver. She noted these are new services that will be added to the continuum of care.

Commissioner Murphy spoke to the \$56 million in funding directed towards innovations services that are not identified as Medicaid eligible and questioned if there were any legislative opportunities to make this an eligible service.

Larson stated that 1915 (i) will address a few of those services and the state must approve a particular level of service slots. She noted the General Assembly will have to give permission to administer this legislation and provide matching funds, as each slot would have an approximate annual budget of up to \$135,000.

Ward reviewed the highest serving behavioral healthcare providers during the previous fiscal year:

- Cone Health
- Family Service of the Piedmont, Inc.
- RHA Behavioral Health, LLC
- Monarch
- Daymark Recovery Services, Inc.
- Neuropsychiatric Care Center, PLLC
- High Point Regional Health System

Ward noted that multiple rounds of service rate increases started in 2014 and they have observed a 15% increase in residential and intensive community services as a result of COVID-19. He confirmed that they have seen certain locally driven reinvestment initiatives, such as Guilford County's Child and Adolescent Facility-Based Crisis Center and funding to support assessments, treatment planning and staffing reimbursements at the County's Detention Centers.

Ward introduced the 2022 Annual Gaps Assessment and stated there is limited partial hospitalization offered at the Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC) location through Cone Health. He shared that substance abuse (SA) services are needed and reviewed the SA continuum. Ward discussed the need for detox services, such as step-down opportunities through outpatient services or a residential halfway house.

Ward emphasized these types of services are needed for recovery and noted Guilford County does not have any female or male halfway houses in the community. He reviewed the qualifications for these facilities and noted there are entrance and exit criteria, as well as licensing provisions that must be met in order to receive state or Medicaid funding.

Commissioner Murphy questioned if staff could provide a crisis continuum diagram that illustrates the relationship between these services.

Ward discussed the themes from the last provider and member surveys, which included: housing and residential service options and supports; access to services without Medicaid or access to non-Medicaid services; increased community awareness of available services and how to access them; and transportation availability.

Halford questioned if there were any differences between the themes identified by providers versus those identified by members.

Ward stated there no significant differences between the needs identified by both groups.

Ward reviewed opportunities for investment and funding options. He noted that Medicaid is not a flexible pot of funding, but if there is an opportunity to increase or adjust state dollars, individuals currently ineligible to receive these services may become eligible.

Ward introduced the concept of Medicaid In Lieu of Service definitions, which allows them to craft the definition of a service that is currently unavailable but has been identified as helpful to the patient(s). He shared these services have to be budget neutral and vetted by the state and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Ward noted if they define the service as something that will keep patients from requiring higher-cost services, such as inpatient hospitalization, there is a greater chance of approval for the in-lieu service. He confirmed this is a lengthy process and shared the BHUC definition is an example of an in-lieu of service definition, as patients who visit BHUC are less likely to visit a hospital because their needs are addressed outside of this level of care.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the average length of time for the process.

Ward stated that, because they created the BHUC definition, the process took approximately six (6) months. He noted that, if the in-lieu of definition had been created by another LME/MCO, they have the opportunity to borrow it, undergo a budget assessment and the process only takes a one (1) month, with state and federal review taking approximately three (3) months.

Ward noted the final opportunity for investment in facility-based respite. He shared state facilities have encountered many challenges, including staffing, and a local option could be very useful. Ward spoke to the opportunity of identifying an in-lieu of definition related to facility-based respite that would re-direct patients from higher levels of care and there may be the possibility of pulling down Medicaid dollars that would assist with long-term growth. He stated that, if there are flexible dollars available to pilot the project, they would have access to data that shows utilization, specifically the number of individuals that utilized facility-based respite versus visiting the hospital. Ward stated this pilot period could be used to build the in-lieu of definition that would increase the opportunity to gain ongoing dollars to support the initiative.

Chairman Alston requested the options be made available in writing for further Board review and consideration.

Commissioner Perdue spoke to the complexity of the process and expressed hope that working with the consultant would assist the Board in building templates and developing the documents that include options. He questioned where County dollars are currently being used, and if shifted, how they might impact current programs.

Ward provided an overview of the maintenance of efforts (MOE) dollars and noted \$3.8 million is directed to Cone Health, approximately \$2 million is directed to RHA for the High Point facility, just over \$2 million is distributed to Daymark for the long-term substance abuse treatment center on Wendover Avenue, just under \$250,000 is directed to ARCA for detox services and \$750,000 is distributed to the Alexander Youth Network for child facility-based crises. He explained that, Sandhills Center, administers this funding on behalf of Guilford County and manages the contracts and authorizes funding for services. Ward emphasized this is County funding and if they chose to reallocate dollars to another project, Sandhills would work with the County on the adjustment. Ward cautioned that, once these funds were moved to another project, the County would be tasked with finding replacement funds for the original service.

Commissioner Murphy questioned how much of the behavioral health service dollars are directed towards staffing reimbursements at the Detention Center and if the changing needs for services have been re-evaluated.

Ward stated Medicaid funds cannot be spent in detention centers are those who are incarcerated lose their eligibility and noted only \$200,000 in reimbursement dollars are being directed to cover night and weekend staff expenses. He noted Mental Health of the Triad is also being reimbursed for the assessments being conducted.

Larsen shared a certain state has submitted a plan requesting Medicaid coverage for incarcerated individuals that was approved by the federal government.

Murphy expressed her frustration with Medicaid rules that suspend the service for those who are incarcerated and spoke to the need to continue Medicaid reimbursement for those who are justice-involved.

Larsen discussed the opportunity to create a re-entry program that will assist in reinstating Medicaid upon the detainees' release date.

Murphy expressed her interest in researching how to get a plan approved for ongoing Medicaid coverage for incarcerated individuals in NC.

Isler shared his hope that the asset-mapping process will assist in developing a plan on how to address these types of issues, specifically for vulnerable populations. He spoke to the behavioral health assessment that will be conducted to identify how best to assist those who are incarcerated and those re-entering society.

Commissioner Cashion confirmed this has been a top priority of the state association and NACo as it is an issued across the United States and opined that if there has not been any movement in legislation at the federal level, concerns related to funding may outweigh healthcare needs.

Chairman Alston questioned the County's investment in behavioral health services.

Ward confirmed the County spends approximately \$9.6 million annually, although there was a slight increase with development of the new facility.

Chairman Alston questioned Sandhills investment into the County services.

Ward stated that, while state and federal Medicaid dollars are provided to the County, they have observed a decrease in state funding but an increase in Medicaid funding due increases in reimbursement rates. He reminded the Board that Sandhills only manages the funds but there is no separate revenue stream besides state, federal and County funds.

Chairman Alston questioned the amount of federal funding Guilford County receives.

Ward confirmed he could estimate this amount based on a per member, per month rate and would provide this information to the Board. He reminded the Board that, during a December 2022 work session, he shared Guilford County makes up 49.7% of spending and 44.9% of the membership. Ward noted Guilford is spending more funding than the amount of revenue received for members.

Commissioner Cooke clarified that individuals living outside of the County who receive services in our facilities are also being included in our spending.

Commissioner Murphy questioned if the 49.7% includes all three funding sources.

Ward confirmed and referenced the December 19, 2022 letter which indicated Guilford County received Medicaid funded spending in the amount of \$167.2 million last fiscal year.

The Board requested the total amount of Medicaid funding allocated to Guilford County and the total reinvestment dollars.

Chairman Alston questioned if Sandhills could pay for any additional services, such as the costs associated with operation of a rehabilitation center.

Ward confirmed that if the provider offered Medicaid-eligible services, Sandhills could cover those expenses, but non-Medicaid services would require adjustments to the County's reinvestment dollars as state dollars are limited.

Chairman Alston requested clarification on Sandhills fund balance.

Ward shared there is a process to request this funding from the Sandhills Center Board.

Chairman Alston questioned if Sandhills provides funding to the Guilford County Continuum of Care (CoC).

Ward noted Sandhills does not allocate any funding to the CoC but they do have a \$60,000 contract with Partners Ending Homelessness for a housing support specialist. He shared that, when an individual being served through the CoC visits a provider for a Medicaid billable or state-funded service, Sandhills would likely be responsible for covering this cost.

Chairman Alston advocated for additional funding to support case management services offered by the CoC. He spoke to his recent participation in the Point-In-Time (PIT) count and shared his conversations with those experiencing chronic homelessness. Alston expressed concern that the County does not have the services or transportation to assist them.

Isler thanked Ward for presenting on these important topics and summarized the discussion. He reviewed the County's MOE funding and confirmed they are working with Sandhills to incorporate more detailed outcome measures for our providers. Isler shared that the County is making investments in pillar programs, including long-term substance abuse and residential living services that are offered at the Daymark location. He spoke to the emergency room diversion work and crisis assessments occurring in High Point and at the Greensboro Behavioral Health Center.

Isler discussed the ARCA detoxification/withdrawal management program and noted that, although it is located outside of Guilford County, sometimes it is best for patients to transition out of their community versus remaining in areas that could trigger the need for substance use. He shared they are working to identify reserved beds that can be used in collaboration with the GCSTOP program for those who need immediate placement.

Isler confirmed they are having discussions related to the staffing model for behavioral health services in order to avoid issues with service delivery. He noted they are also working on reimbursement for services and shared they have worked within the Medicaid Transformation model and are working with five (5) insurance providers. Isler continued to provide updates on

how they will cultivate investments in the detox and group-living entities supported through County funding.

Isler summarized the presentation and noted they must consider the County's MOE allocation capacity, how to leverage and blend existing revenue for opioid recovery through the Option B planning process, working with the consultant to craft a legislative request and how to grow and expand in partnership with community-based partnerships.

Commissioner Perdue spoke to the importance of ensuring the County's programming meets the needs of those we serve.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the objective of today's discussion.

Isler stated the major point of this conversation is awareness as these considerations will be discussed during the FY 2023-24 budget process. He noted they are also providing updates related to ARPA and Opioid Settlement fund planning, in addition to reviewing the County's response model and deficit of services.

Halford stated that, while there is interest in implementing individual projects for the County, the Board should understand the complexity that is involved.

Commissioner Perdue spoke to the importance of conducting a continual gaps analysis.

Isler noted that adding a 16-bed detox center would cost approximately \$2.3 million.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the estimated ARPA funding allocated towards the projects discussed.

Halford shared that approximately \$4.75 million has been allocated to GCSTOP, behavioral health, detox and group-living enhancements, and foster care, and noted this amount includes access to healthcare for students who need behavioral health services.

Isler shared they have earmarked \$1.5 million towards emergency transition services for foster youth, but failed to receive any bids. He noted they are working with Sandhills Center to make the bid more amenable for existing providers, but spoke to the importance of recognizing the workforce shortage in this area. Isler stated they have received architectural designs for the substance misuse recovery center targeted towards women with children and they are currently under staff review.

Halford noted they have worked on this project for a while and asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Cooke questioned if they would revisit selecting a provider that would offer these services.

Isler stated this would be at the Board's discretion, but noted the preference to select a provider already in this service line who would work in partnership with the County and already has a source of funding.

Isler provided an update on the Homelessness Taskforce and noted \$8 million in ARPA funding had been allocated to address these needs in the community. He noted the CoC receives approximately \$2.6 million, including HUD funding, and spoke to the need to expand service delivery and enhance collaboration. Isler noted those with housing needs come with complex and high needs, and need excellent service delivery. He discussed the various work streams they are working for opportunities and bed count inventory, as compared to peer communities, and shared the need for case management, rapid rehousing and affordable housing rates.

Commissioner Cooke questioned how the peer communities were selected.

Isler stated these communities were chosen based upon the CoC gaps analysis.

Cheri Neal, CoC Program Manager, noted the communities were also selected based upon population size and demographics.

Commissioner Jones questioned how certain counties were selected based upon these criteria.

Neal shared certain counties, like Buncombe, have a robust service delivery area and invest heavily in these services. She noted that they are also similar with regards to the amount of staff dedicated to assist the CoC.

Commissioner Jones questioned if these peer communities would continue to be tracked or would they change. He expressed concern that these areas were selected based upon random criteria and requested staff confirm they would continue to gather metrics on this data.

Isler stated they collaborated with HUD to identify similar peer communities as they prefer to analyze data on a per capita basis. He confirmed work needs to be done related to coordinated entry and access limitations, especially to emergency and transitional beds. He spoke to the opportunity for growth in access to lower barrier shelter beds targeted towards those with substance use disorders, and noted there are still gaps in services for families and high need individuals.

Chairman Alston expressed his agreement with Commissioners Cook and Jones, and shared his interest in learning about surrounding areas.

Isler confirmed he could provide this information. He provided an update on the taskforce and noted they have completed the listening and learning sessions, and are now working on governance and the gaps analysis. Isler noted there is a need to develop a critical access funding plan with the CoC.

Commissioner Murphy spoke to the importance of seeing this information and thanked staff for their intentionality in this investment. She expressed her hope that partners will assist with

match funding. She questioned how the unsheltered population, and the full scope of their needs, are identified.

Isler noted this is how the gaps analysis will benefit them in this area and requested Neal provide additional information on its scope.

Neal shared the analyze will provide insight on gaps in coordinated entry and wrap-around services. She noted the analysis will also address concerns with data, as there have been some challenges in the area, and will bring clarity to the issue of race and how this demographic factor impacts homelessness. Neal confirmed the analysis will highlight the county's need for equity when addressing housing access and affordability.

Commissioner Murphy requested the data from the most recent point-in-time count and questioned how to address the affordable housing crisis.

Isler spoke to the importance of the taskforce and the work streams that will be used to address these issues.

Chairman Alston shared his experience visiting the Interactive Resource Center (IRC) and spoke to the volume of people that have their mail directed to the facility. He noted there was no transportation readily available to transport homeless individuals to safe places. Alston spoke to the collaborative efforts of the taskforce and its commitment to holistic improvements. He stated there is not only a need for housing, but also for substance abuse treatment, to ensure an individual can sustain within a shelter environment.

Isler summarized the presentation and confirmed they have received feedback from various departments that these are not isolated issues, but co-occurring, and spoke to the need for a concept design discussion related to leveraging additional staff and consultant time to focus the provision of these basic needs.

#### One Place: A "One Guilford" Initiative

Isler introduced the One Place: a "One Guilford" initiative concept designed to support high-need, vulnerable adults in a single space. He defined the target population as those in medical distress, those suffering from persistent mental illness, those needing reentry assistance and those who are homeless or housing insecure.

Isler stated One Place could serve as a collaborative that would break down barriers associated with social determinants of health, offers stability and promotes self-reliance based on a person-centered approach. He spoke to the importance of extending wrap-around support and initiatives via enhanced case management and peer support services to foster favorable outcomes.

Isler discussed the benefits of One Place and noted the concept could provide a targeted approach to serving the most vulnerable while addressing community partner concerns with the demands placed on services with high users. He stated the concept would also promote HUD's Housing First Model while leveraging community resources and encouraging collaboration.

Isler spoke to the importance of considering funding needs that could support these programs, including Medicaid service definitions or in lieu of opportunities, IMD rules & the 1115 waiver, limited local HUD dollars, long-term fiscal impacts and planning with key stakeholders, determining and diverting the cost of high users and legislative considerations that could support this initiative.

Larsen noted there is a cross-functional team currently working on behalf of the County and stated that, with regards to the 1115 waiver, there are many options not previously available that will allow them to work with other providers and bring their resources to the table. She noted this project will then have to be scoped and scaled.

Commissioner Murphy expressed her hope for the initiative and shared her appreciation for thinking beyond silos and looking across systems to take a whole person approach. She noted this concept reminds her of the Family Justice Center (FJC) model and how they leverage multiple partners to bring opportunity and change.

Commissioner Cooke questioned their thoughts on the scope of the initiative.

Isler stated this is a significant topic and requires a substantial overview, but noted there is need to research MOE efforts and ARPA funding. He shared the primary goal for today's presentation is providing awareness and identifying next steps and direction.

Halford noted this is currently just a concept and spoke to the need to discuss space and potential property acquisition.

Commissioner Murphy questioned if Medicaid funding can be used for this project and if we only need to seek dollars for those who are Medicaid ineligible.

Larson shared there are many possibilities that can be considered under the "in lieu of" definition and spoke to confirming the direction of the Board before moving forward with LME/MCO discussions. She noted they will advocate on behalf of the Board while working on collaborative partnerships.

Commissioner Murphy questioned if the County would be responsible for developing partnerships required for the operation of One Place and if they have any ideas on who could offer support.

Isler spoke to the importance of working with community partners to develop these opportunities and engaging the CoC, as this will become a level of service provision.

Halford shared they are working to identify if additional staff work is required, and expressed his interest in gaining the consensus of the Board regarding staff direction.

By unanimous consent, the Board recessed the meeting for ten (10) minutes.

## Opioid Recovery Funding Overview

Dr. Vann provided an update on Opioid Recovery funding and shared the County will receive approximately \$21.7 million over the next eighteen (18) years. She reviewed the guiding principles of the memorandum of agreement (MOA) outlining how these funds should be invested within the community.

Dr. Vann discussed the Option B spending plan that includes three (3) categories: treatment strategies and tactics, prevention and other strategies that can be invested in for opioid response. She shared that implementation of a collaborative taskforce and work group will be required to plan for a needs assessment and to develop a work plan that will allow the County to move forward, and confirmed the facilitator will assist with these activities. Dr. Vann compared the work conducted by the homelessness taskforce to the coordination and collaboration that will be required for the opioid response.

Dr. Vann noted the primary objectives of this collaborative work is to raise awareness about opioid addiction, provide information on prevention, treatment and recover resources offered by local stakeholders and undertake initiatives to combat this issue. She discussed the conditions required to ensure change and success through a collective impact.

Halford invited staff leading ARPA projects to the join him for the remainder of the presentation. He shared this information is also available as a dashboard on the website. Halford reviewed the handout shared with the Board and discussed the status of items under the Access to Healthcare goals. He noted all but one of the projects have an active contract and confirmed many of the projects were recently approved. Halford discussed the administrative projects completed and discussed the social innovations in healthcare initiative conducted in collaboration with Cone Health.

Halford discussed Behavioral Health projects and noted they are moving forward with evaluation of the former LINKS building as a potential site for a housing and residential program facility for women with children. He shared the Emergency Therapeutic Transitional Foster Care service was bid out, but there were no responses, so staff will work with the Sandhills Center to re-evaluate the scope.

Halford spoke to the status of Broadband and Digital Inclusion projects and the collaborative work to identify gaps in this service. He noted one goal of the state study was to understand access needs for residents of our housing authorities. Halford shared that Jason Jones, Assistant County Manager, will work with local municipalities to understand access, availability and affordability in order to develop a plan that will address access barriers.

Halford discussed the remaining ARPA projects and noted contracts for several projects under the Small Business Economy and Workforce Development category will be presented to Board at its next meeting.

Halford referenced the list of priorities the Board requested staff work on over the next two (2) years and noted these would most benefit from an integrated service delivery system. He shared

that two (2) of the positions from the time-limited, four-person pandemic recovery team could be transitioned into permanent County positions to assist with integrated service delivery.

Chairman Alston questioned the positions.

Halford shared one position would be a Director of Integrated Service Delivery and Integrated Data, and the second position would assist with navigation of data use sharing agreements with partners.

**Motion was made by Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster, and seconded by Commissioner Frankie T. Jones, Jr., to approve two (2) full-time positions dedicated to Integrated Service Delivery and Integrated Data Systems, and authorize staff to utilize County funds to cover costs associated with these positions.**

Chairman Alston questioned if these positions will be covered through ARPA funding.

Halford confirmed the positions will be covered by ARPA funding through 2026 and will then be included in the County's annual budget. He shared \$10 million in ARPA funding had been allocated to this project, of which \$250,000 to \$300,000, including supplies, will be dedicated to the positions.

Commissioner Jones questioned the need for a motion.

Halford shared this was originally intended as a grant-funded project that would be time-limited as funding would end in 2026. He noted these positions will now be covered through County funding and this transition required Board approval.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the types of positions that would be transitioned to this team.

Halford clarified two (2) members of the pandemic recovery team tasked with working on the social innovation team with Cone Health would be redirected to work on the IDS team.

Commissioner Perdue noted that, while data is critical, he expressed concern with expediting the hire of these positions.

Halford spoke to the need to utilize these positions in developing the RFP to assist with the IDS evaluation and implementation process.

The Board discussed the IDS/ISD project.

**Motion was made by Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster, and seconded by Commissioner Frankie T. Jones, Jr., to approve two (2) full-time positions dedicated to Integrated Service Delivery and Integrated Data Systems, and authorize staff to utilize County funds to cover costs associated with these positions.**

**VOTE: Motion carried 6 - 1**  
**AYES: Melvin "Skip" Alston, J. Carlvena Foster, Mary Beth Murphy, Carly Cooke, Kay Cashion, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Alan Perdue**  
**NOES: Alan Perdue**  
**ABSENT: Pat Tillman, James Upchurch**

#### **IV. REVIEW AND PLAN: FY 2023 PRIORITIES REVIEW & FY 2024 PRIORITY AREAS**

Halford reviewed the top priorities and future priorities discussed during the Board's 2022 Annual Retreat.

Halford shared staff have been working with healthcare partners to identify gaps in services and needs in certain communities, especially in areas where Guilford County Schools propose including community health clinics in schools.

Commissioner Murphy questioned if any of the proposed community clinics to be included in new-build or renovated schools will be in jeopardy as a result of the value engineering process that was requested by the Board.

Halford shared he did not believe any of those projects will be impacted at this time.

Commissioner Jones questioned when the Board could expect an update on the community needs and resources related to health disparities.

Isler stated Public Health is developing a staff approach to access to healthcare. He shared they are collaborating with local healthcare partners on this topic and spoke to opportunities related to mobile health service delivery.

Halford provided an update on the strategy to expand paramedicine and the county-wide communication and education campaign, along with other project updates. He discussed updates to data use and data sharing agreements with Ready for School, Ready for Life and Shift\_Ed.

Halford discussed the grant submitted by the Child Welfare Prevention Team for its initiatives.

Commissioner Jones questioned the timeline for the grant.

Barlow stated the grant is from the Casey Foundation and they should receive a response in June or July regarding a potential grant start date of January 2024.

Halford continued to review the remaining priorities and discussed initial conversations related to aligning economic investments to ensure equitable outcomes.

Commissioner Cooke noted the Healthy Childhood Environments category only includes primary initiatives with Ready for School, Ready for Life and Shift-Ed, and opined that, while progress has been made, there is much more work to do in this area.

Halford noted that a lot of this work is already happening within county departments. He discussed the need for a work session on February 16 to complete the discussion of top Board priorities.

The Board discussed potential dates and next steps for setting priorities.

Halford shared the Community-Based Organizations application for FY 2023-24 funding will go live next week.

## **V. BUDGET UPDATE**

Halford introduced the Service Inventory document and thanked the Budget & Management Services team for developing this guide.

Toy Beeninga, Budget & Management Services Director, provided an overview of County services and how they are provided. He noted 48% of the total budget goes towards Education and education-related debt, with 21% dedicated to Successful People, 20% aligns with Strong Community and 9% with Quality Government.

Beeninga shared the County's three (3) largest revenue sources are Property Tax at 65%, and sales tax and federal/state revenues at 12% each. He stated nearly 9 out of 10 dollars of revenue supports the following core county services: education, law enforcement, public health, social services, emergency services, information technology and behavioral health.

Beeninga noted we have approximately 2,889 budget positions to deliver services and Guilford County has one of the lowest staffing ratios in the state.

Beeninga confirmed base revenues are returning to historical growth patterns, but they are not exceeding expense growth. He stated they are monitoring economic indicators and shared that, while unemployment numbers remain low, inflation remains high but is beginning to trend in a positive direction.

Beeninga discussed property taxes and their assumed collection rates. He shared the blended collection rate for Guilford County is budgeted at approximately 99%, though the FY 2022 rate was 99.3%. Beeninga noted these rates can be adjusted by the Board to meet their priorities. He reviewed the property tax discount rate of 0.5% and noted that, if the Board chose to increase the

rate, the County will lose approximately \$1.4 million in budget revenue. Beeninga confirmed the Board would have to pass a resolution to change the rate by May 1.

Commissioner Murphy questioned their statutory obligations related to the resolution language and if it would commit the Board to raising the discount rate.

Beeninga stated the resolution only confirms the Board's decision to set the discount rate. He shared approximately 8,000 people, or 3% of total taxpayers, participated in the tax relief programs offered by the Tax Department. Beeninga shared they are working with Tax to identify the value of this participation.

Beeninga reviewed the per capita tax revenue comparison for the ten (10) largest counties and noted Guilford is aligned with the other counties in this measure. He noted the majority of these counties have gone through a recent revaluation and tax rates are either in line or slightly lower, but Guilford is ranked sixth in per capita tax revenue out of the ten largest counties.

Beeninga stated that, in NC, counties are authorized to charge up to seven (7) cents per dollar and Guilford County currently charges 6.75 cents in sales tax. He shared that we distribute these revenues to our municipalities, fire districts and the remainder stays with the County. Beeninga noted the state keeps 4.75 cents of this revenue and the County receives the remaining 2 cents.

Chairman Alston questioned if the County has the authority to levy another quarter cent in general local sales tax.

Beeninga clarified that the levy would have to be approved by our voters or the state, and the county does not have the sole authority to authorize this tax.

Beeninga discussed the estimated growth in sales tax collection projections they use when budgeting this revenue. He noted the FY 2023 projections continue to trend higher than projections. Beeninga noted sales tax is a more volatile revenue source that is based on economic indicators.

Beeninga reviewed other major revenue sources such as charges for services and state or grant funding. He stated the Board has the ability to adjust fees charged to generate additional revenue.

Beeninga spoke to their interest in decreasing the use of fund balance, and shared they anticipate only using approximately \$5 million. He stated that, as expenses increase, they will need to intentionally add to the fund balance in order to avoid decline. Beeninga shared staff would like to return at a later date to further discuss the fund balance policy.

Beeninga shared the expense growth is approximately 2.7%, which is greater than revenue growth. He noted the state increased its mandated retirement contribution and the Board's decision to fully fund the compensation plan, which was approximately \$21 million. Beeninga shared this will result in approximately \$6.3 million in expenses that must be absorbed in next year's budget, including merit increases.

Beeninga discussed major contracts that would have to be evaluated next year for Behavioral Health services, in addition to our debt service model. He confirmed that the base expense growth is approximately \$21 million while the base revenue growth will only be \$13 million.

Beeninga discussed unknown factors that could influence the budget, including the Guilford County Schools' and Guilford Technical Community College budget requests. He shared we have approximately \$5 million built into the budget to address growth in expenses, but if their request is larger than estimated, adjustments related to tax revenues may be needed.

Beeninga stated the Medicaid eligible population is growing faster than the non-Medicaid eligible population, and Medicaid expansion will have a definite impact upon our expenses. He also noted the average age of County facilities is 46 years and ongoing capital maintenance needs must be included in the budget. Beeninga spoke to an increased demand on services resulting from our aging population and confirmed that the County's ongoing challenges with the current ERP system could have a \$2-3 million impact on the budget.

Beeninga reviewed the key takeaways from the presentation and shared they are working to close an \$8 million gap between base expenses and base revenues.

Chairman Alston questioned the percentage of revenue staff estimate will be brought in above the overall budget.

Halford stated that the County typically receives 2-3% above the budgeted revenue, and noted that adjusting this amount would be based upon the level of risk the Board is willing to take. Beeninga added that a 3-4% assumed vacancy credit is built into the budget, but noted this trend is not being observed across all departments because of fewer vacancies.

Chairman Alston emphasized there are variables within the budget that would allow the County to cover this \$8 million gap without increasing property tax rates.

Commissioner Cooke questioned staff assumptions related to the schools' budget request.

Beeninga stated they typically assume 3% year-to-year growth in expenses and the County sets aside \$5 million to cover this natural growth.

Commissioner Murphy clarified that if the school system has operational deficiencies or challenges to address, they will need to discuss how to cover these expenses.

Beeninga discussed the debt service model and introduced the four (4) key assumptions with the model: timing, interest rates, dollar amount of the issuances and revenue estimates for sales and property taxes. He discussed debt ratios as they are monitored by the LGC and credit rating agencies, and noted the only area exceeding the County's threshold is our debt service as a proportion of total general fund expenses.

Beeninga reminded the Board of the property tax set asides included in the debt model specifically to address capital needs. He reviewed the issuances released in 2022 and the planned releases in the FY 2023 budget. Beeninga noted the \$50 million in set-aside funding will be applied to debt service peaks in order to lessen the impact upon county operations.

Beeninga discussed the potential to adjust the financing strategies for the \$1.7 billion bond to address certain challenges that may be encountered. He spoke to the importance of cash flows in structuring the issuance of debt and discussed the use of bond anticipation notes that will lessen the pressure on the cash flow side. Beeninga discussed the pros and cons of utilizing this financing strategy and shared the proposed calendar to issue bonds or pursue bond anticipation notes.

Beeninga reviewed next steps and the importance of utilizing the service inventory to evaluate continuing operation budgets, program enhancement requests and the impact of certain services upon the community. He discussed additional community engagement strategies, such as the design of a digital budget book and conducting community budget meetings. Beeninga shared the Community-Based Organizations (CBO) site is up and available for review and introduced the budget calendar for the remainder of the year.

## **VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

**By unanimous consent, the Board recessed the meeting and entered into closed session, pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) and (5), for the purposes of consulting with the County Attorney and to discuss the acquisition of property at 3:51PM.**

The Board reconvened the meeting and returned to open session at 5:24PM.

## **VII. ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, by unanimous consent, the Guilford County Board of Commissioners' adjourned their Annual Retreat at 5:24PM.**

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Melvin "Skip" Alston  
Chairman

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Robin Keller  
Clerk to Board