

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

Greensboro, North Carolina
September 4, 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., Pat Tillman (via virtual communication), and Alan Perdue.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Victor Isler; County Attorney Andrea Leslie-Fite; Clerk to the Board Robin Keller, Deputy Clerk to the Board T’ebony Rosa; Erris Dunston, Assistant County Manager; Toy Beeninga, Budget and Management Director; Ben Chavis, Tax Department Director; Abby Gostling, Special Projects Manager; 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 4:06 p.m.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. RECEIVE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ON HB 305

County Attorney Victor Isler reviewed the work session agenda. He introduced the agenda item and recognized County Attorney Andrea Leslie-Fite.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite noted that the law became effective during this year’s long session. She noted that a qualifying municipality may now receive an allocated share of the net proceeds of taxes collected pursuant to Article 39, 40, 42, and Chapter 105. She reviewed the definition of a qualifying municipality.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite noted the new laws associated with Session Law 2025-87. She noted that the law modifies the structure of the ballot language. She noted that there are several requirements to receive distribution. She spoke to the qualifying municipalities who shall adopt a resolution indicating their intent to receive an allocated share no later than October of this year. She stated that resolutions adopted in any other year must be adopted during the month of April. She noted that certified resolution copies must be delivered to the Secretary of Revenue. She explained that in order to be able to proceed, the Board must adopt a resolution, which the Board

has already done. She shared that staff will be preparing an updated resolution based on the changes in legislation.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite explained that the ballot question is “For” or “Against” local sales and use tax at the rate of one-quarter of one percent (0.25%) in addition to all other state and local sales and use “taxes to be used solely for classroom teacher salary supplements, fire protection equipment and services, for Guilford Technical Community College, and to be used by municipalities for any public purpose.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite noted that if approved, it would continue until a jurisdiction withdraws its resolution of support. She noted that there is a strict prohibition on the supplanting of funds. She explained that the look-back period for supplanting is a period of ten (10) years.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the ballot question, noting that it does not include the percent going to the teachers. She shared that this new language still does not clarify the percent of each allocation to the areas.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite noted that the statutory language would be considered as a component of education.

Chairman Alston noted that the statute is where the clarity of the breakdown as agreed to by Senator Berger and the Senate. He expressed hope that the staff would include that percentage language in the education communication.

Commissioner Cooke noted that the last phrase of the ballot question can be “used by municipalities for any public purpose” is a little misleading as there are very few municipalities in Guilford County that qualify under this statute.

Commissioner Perdue questioned the liability on the County if the funds are distributed to the appropriate agencies, and the county’s intent is to not supplant and that liability would be placed on those receiving entities should they utilize the funds in an inappropriate manner.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite clarified that there will need to be education on qualifying municipalities.

Chairman Alston noted that those qualifying municipalities are those that do not levy the ad valorem taxes.

Budget Director Toy Beeninga defined Per Capita and Ad Valorem Distribution. He noted that the Board of Commissioners traditionally uses the Ad Valorem distribution method. He explained that currently in Guilford County, one (1) municipality does not levy a tax, and that is Stokesdale. He noted that if the county switched to per-capita distributions, it would lose \$16M in sales tax revenue.

Budget Director Beeninga shared that there are two (2) sections in the bill where the House started, and *Section 2 - Article 46 Sales Tax*, added by the Senate. He described *Section 1 - Municipalities that do not levy property taxes*, and this section would only apply to Stokesdale and does not assume income from Article 46. He stated that if Stokesdale passes a resolution,

they would be eligible for a distribution. He explained that if Article 46 passes on the ballot, Section 1 goes away.

Budget Director Beeninga explained that under Section 2, if passed by the voters, would generate roughly \$28.7M in sales tax revenue. He noted that the legislative formula outlines three (3) distribution steps.

- 20% or \$5M for the Guilford Fire and Rescue Council
- 10% or \$2.7M for Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC)
- \$1.3M distributed to the municipalities.

Budget Director Beeninga outlined Step 2, where the bill determines a calculation as to how each municipality would be handled. He explained that how much they receive under ad valorem, and how much they would receive if the County did a per capita distribution. He stated that if there is a positive delta in the formula, they would receive a portion of the Article 46 distribution.

Commissioner Jones questioned how close Archdale and Sedalia at some point become eligible.

Budget Director Beeninga noted that it is likely that they would become eligible, but it is not likely that High Point or Greensboro would become eligible.

Chairman Alston spoke to the Article 46 formula and noted that you do not have to levy a property tax to receive Article 46 sales tax. He questioned whether levying taxes reduces taxes and breaks even.

Budget Director Beeninga noted that there is a way to reduce, but it is not likely that they would be able to break even. If they did do that they would lose distribution from the other Articles 39, 40, and 42.

Commissioner Cashion questioned if that would be considered supplanting.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite opined that she did not consider that supplanting as that language is in regards for funding for GTCC, schools and Fire Services, and not regarding taxing levels. She cautioned that it is a new law and the supplanting language only appears in regards to the specific funding.

Commissioner Cooke noted that because this is only ¼ cent and the other two (2) cents that is associated with the other articles. She expressed concern that it would be very difficult to financially benefit because of this legislation.

Chairman Alston noted that this is a balancing act.

Commissioner Tillman noted an example: Summerfield recently raised their taxes, and it may have more of an appetite to adjust its tax rate for its citizens.

Budget Director Beeninga noted that one (1) additional component for Summerfield is that the first \$3M would need to be directed towards their Fire Districts, which would probably take five (5) or six (6) years to meet that requirement.

Chairman Alston recognized former Commissioners Alan Branson and Hank Hennings in the audience.

County Manager Isler noted that we recognize that there are several mechanics to this one and will have additional conversations.

Commissioner Tillman also recognized the Mayor of Stokesdale, Mike Crawford, and Mayor Pro-Tem Derric Foy from Stokesdale.

Budget Director Beeninga noted that following the funding formula, we would be able to allocate the \$27.4M remainder as follows: \$5.5M for the Fire Rescue Council, \$2.7 M for GTCC, and \$19.2M for Guilford County Schools. He noted that if the Board maintains the ad valorem distribution, we do not lose funds.

Commissioner Murphy noted that if Article 46 passes, then Section 1 of this bill ceases and the county does not have a \$220K loss.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the Fire and Rescue Council composition.

Jim Albright, Emergency Services Director, confirmed that it includes everyone. He explained that the Council has a Funding Committee that they are working through, and there are many logistics to work out before this goes to the ballot.

Commissioner Murphy noted that Greensboro and High Point have funding in place for a funding apparatus now, as where our smaller agencies do not have the same resources as our Rural Fire Districts.

Emergency Services Director Albright noted that there are active conversations in place, but for our Municipal Fire Districts, there are no final decisions. He shared that they do want a very formal structure for management and distribution.

Commissioner Murphy questioned how input is collected as they work towards a final decision. She further questioned whether there would be a public comment opportunity.

Emergency Services Director Albright noted that they are seeking approval from the entire group, and every Chief has equal voting rights.

Budget Director Beeninga noted that this year we allocated funds for classified workers and not teacher supplements.

Commissioner Jones spoke to the terminology for existing funds for other resources, and questioned the broad nature of the other resources bucket, specifically prior American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocations.

Budget Director Beeninga confirmed that staff will continue to research that topic.

County Attorney Leslie-Fite confirmed that other resources fall under the subcategory of county uses. She noted that she and her team would need to analyze that further for a more complete opinion.

Commissioner Cooke questioned whether we have determined when and what are the ten (10) years to be used in the calculation.

County Manager Isler noted that we will begin working on the ten (10) year projections.

Budget Director Beeninga reviewed the timeline of next steps, noting that the Board will reconsider an amended resolution on November 5, 2026 to obtain voter approval with funds beginning in July 2027.

Commissioner Tillman noted on slide 16 (Timeline on Next Steps) that there is a non-binding voter referendum.

Budget Director Beeninga confirmed a language follow-up.

Emergency Services Director Albright reviewed the operational impact analysis and spoke to challenges facing the Fire Districts. He noted that we continue to see challenges with declining volunteerism. The current model was established in the 1950s and is based on volunteer labor.

Emergency Services Director Albright explained the increased costs and competitiveness for labor. He noted that our fire departments are seeing highly inflationary costs of apparatus, for example, 100% increase in five (5) years. He shared that service district revenue is constrained to geographic districts with variability of growth. He noted that H305 affords an opportunity to diversify funding streams, allowing districts to concentrate on labor and operating costs with district funding.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to slide 7 (Ballot Question). She noted that the goal was to get language on the ballot and be very clear as to what citizens are voting for. She shared that in her opinion, the ballot language has confused the issue, and urged other elected leaders to help clarify the language and educate the citizens.

Commissioner Cashion shared that former Commissioners Henning and Branson, along with Perdue, worked on the Family Justice Center (FJC) program for eight (8) years and thanked them for their work to make it happen.

B. RECEIVE ANNUAL ARPA UPDATES

County Manager Isler introduced the agenda item and recognized Special Projects Manager Abby Gostling.

Special Projects Manager Gostling provided an overview of the 2025 ARPA Recovery Plan update. She explained that the full plan has been provided to the Board, with project pages on every ARPA project, and with updates on what has been done through the year.

Special Projects Manager Gostling reviewed the twelve (12) strategic priority areas. She reviewed the ARPA funding obligation deadlines and those ARPA-enabled funds. She shared that we have until December 2026 for the Federal allocations. She noted that in regards to the ARPA-enabled funds, those are projects that we knew would take longer to spend, we have \$48M in that category with \$8.8M expended to date.

Special Projects Manager Gostling explained that with these funds being fully obligated, the team has moved out of project and scope of work, and the team is transitioning into monitoring of the work.

Special Projects Manager Gostling reviewed the monitoring programs appropriated into three (3) tiers:

- Tier 1 are ARPA Funds, the most stringent federal compliance criteria
- Tier 2 ARPA funding and revenue replacement that require quarterly monitoring
- Tier 3 ARPA-Enabled County funds and County budget monitoring.

Special Projects Manager Gostling spoke to the remaining slides reviewing specific project updates, and noted specific project highlights. She noted that the Bridge opened its permanent community center. She noted that as they look at access to health care, 80% has been spent. She shared that the comprehensive food assessment has been completed. She noted that they have been recognized across the state for their community engagement work.

Special Projects Manager Gostling explained that under Behavioral Health and Substance Use, including work with the Recovery Housing for Pregnant and Parenting Women design work has been occurring. She noted that our investment of \$100K has resulted in over \$2M in broadband investment in Guilford County. She noted the ongoing work on the Homelessness Taskforce, including Continuum of Care (CoC) Funding, Eviction Diversion program, and the CoC Core staffing.

Special Projects Manager Gostling spoke to the integrated data services of the Legal Support Center, which has opened in High Point, with Greensboro on the way soon. She highlighted Parks and Recreation, including several park projects in Jamestown, Oak Ridge, and Sedalia. She noted that Sedalia was able to create its first park and had completed its Park Plan.

Special Projects Manager Gostling spoke to Protect Guilford County Services, where there was some of the early spending for critical services. She reviewed the Small Business, Economy and Work Force Development Projects including Action Greensboro, Arts Greensboro, and Forge Greensboro, to name a few. She noted the Water and Sewer projects, in various stages of construction.

Special Projects Manager Gostling highlighted the completed projects to include the High Point YMCA, Jamestown Stormwater Project, Nussbaum Steelhouse, and the Oak Ridge Town Park. She noted high-level partnership impacts, including nine (9) municipal partners leading projects, eighteen (18) County departments engaged in project implementation or administrative support, forty-six (46) nonprofit partners leading projects, and over 73K households or individuals directly benefited from ARPA funding programs to date.

C. RECEIVE UPDATE ON 2026 SCHEDULE OF VALUES, STANDARDS AND RULES FOR 2026 REAL PROPERTY TAX REAPPRAISAL

County Manager Isler introduced this item and recognized Tax Director Ben Chavis.

Tax Director Chavis introduced the work for formulating the values for reappraisal. He noted that the schedule of values is required by North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS). There will be some additional calendar of events along with a copy in the Clerk's Office for public viewing.

Tax Director Chavis noted that NCGS §105-286 mandates a reappraisal at least every eight (8) years. He shared that Guilford County and larger jurisdictions have a shorter cycle, such as every four (4) to five (5) years. He shared that NCGS §105-317c mandates Board approval of the Schedule of Values (SOV) with the following specifics to include: (1) The SOV must be accepted and then ultimately approved by the Board of Commissioners, (2) Must be advertised for public inspection and comment, and (3) The SOV remains in effect until the next reappraisal.

Tax Director Chavis shared the reappraisal timeline with an upcoming public hearing in October, with any challenges presented in November. He explained that the goal is to ensure a fair and equitable property valuation with plus or minus 5% of sale ratios. He reviewed the key types of property to include Residential and Commercial Industrial to provide equity of assessment between the types.

Tax Director Chavis highlighted community engagement efforts to include (1) launching a web page devoted exclusively to reappraisal 2026, (2) community meetings with homeowner associations (HOAs), realtor groups, and other stakeholders, and (3) a portal referred to as Comper Citizen for reviewing neighborhood sales.

Tax Director Chavis spoke to a smoother appeal process to include (1) Appeal Pro software for ease of submission and progress tracking, (2) Informal Appraiser reviews next spring, (3) Automatic transfers to the Board of Equalization and Review (BER), if a resolution is not reached, and (4) The owner may appeal to the NC Property Tax Commission, if the BER value is not accepted.

Tax Director Chavis explained the public awareness component to include (1) Checking property information on the county website, (2) Informing the Tax Department of any discrepancies, (3) Checking value as soon as the notice arrives in the mail, (4) Contacting your mortgage company about any increase and requesting an escrow adjustment, and (5) Noting the appeal deadline of May 15, 2026 at 5:00 p.m., EST.

Tax Director Chavis described the bottom line as the SOV acts as the 'rulebook' that assessors follow to ensure properties are valued equitably to reflect current market values as of January 1, 2026. He noted that there was an Executive Summary provided to the Board for review.

Tax Director Chavis recognized Revaluation Manager Nolan Lawson as the collaborator who has done this work for thirty-seven (37) years and noted that Guilford County has one of the most robust SOVs. He acknowledged the Tax Department staff who worked on the SOV.

Chairman Alston questioned the number of upcoming community meetings.

Tax Director Chavis confirmed meeting as requested from different stakeholders, and requested Board input regarding logistics.

Chairman Alston opined on incorporating the SOV talks with the Budget Town Halls.

Tax Director Chavis concurred that such collaborations should occur in January prior to notice distribution in February (residential) and March (commercial).

Chairman Alston questioned the number of appeals during the last valuation and a peer jurisdiction comparison.

Tax Director Chavis confirmed less than 1%, while other counties range around 10%.

Commissioner Tillman questioned the state mandate of eight (8) years and whether the county opted in for a shorter cycle.

Tax Director Chavis confirmed that we have been in a five (5) year schedule and were recently triggered for the four (4) years. He explained that it makes sense to have shorter cycles as large metropolitan valuations change.

County Manager Isler confirmed that due to the County's variance between market value and appraised value, we were moved down to a four (4) year cycle.

Tax Director Chavis provided historical context regarding the NC Department of Revenue's Sales Ratio Study in 2023, which triggered the revaluation for counties with populations over 100K.

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 5:26 p.m.

Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chairman

Robin Keller
Clerk to the Board