

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

Greensboro, North Carolina
July 29, 2022

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed Work Session at 9:00AM in the Carolyn Q. Coleman Conference Room located on the first floor of the Old County Courthouse, 301 W. Market St., Greensboro, NC.

PRESENT: Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston, presiding; Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster; Commissioners Justin Conrad, James Upchurch, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Alan Perdue, Kay Cashion (in at 9:16AM) and Mary Beth Murphy (in at 9:06AM).

ABSENT: Commissioner Carly Cooke.

ALSO PRESENT: Interim County Attorney Matthew Mason; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; Tiffany Oliva, Program & Fiscal Recovery Manager; Assistant County Manager Erris Dunston; Assistant County Manager Victor Isler; Assistant County Manager Jason Jones; Ariane Webb, Deputy Clerk to Board; Abby Gostling, Pandemic Recovery Budget Analyst; Amy Addington, Pandemic Recovery Policy Analyst; 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 Melvin “Skip” Alston welcomed those present and called the meeting to order at 9:00AM.

**II. UPDATE ON AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDING IDEAS
A. 2022-414 ARPA FIRST-PASS RECOMMENDATIONS AND UPDATES**

Tiffany Oliva, Program & Fiscal Recovery Manager, introduced herself and her team: Amy Addington, Pandemic Recovery Policy Analyst, and Abby Gostling, Pandemic Recovery Budget Analyst. She provided an overview of engagement efforts related to ARPA funding projects and discussed the community survey, in-person meetings, economic analysis and broadband analysis. Oliva reviewed the community survey and conversation findings, and noted healthcare and education were the identified as the most important investments for ARPA funding.

Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy arrived to the meeting at 9:06AM.

Oliva reviewed the board priorities and funding principles, which influenced the first-pass projects recommended for ARPA funds.

Commissioner Kay Cashion arrived to the meeting at 9:16AM.

Oliva reminded the Board of its deadline to designate the \$104 million in ARPA funding by December 2024 and expend these funds by December 2026. She confirmed the county's funding principles align with the US Treasury's purposes for ARPA funding that are designed to make transformational impacts and promote resiliency within the community.

Abby Gostling, Pandemic Recovery Budget Analyst, introduced the real-time dashboard that allows the Board to track the ARPA funding budgeted versus remaining funds. She noted the Board has already committed \$12,361,133 in ARPA funding, with \$91,978,619 remaining of the total allocation. Gostling referenced the dashboard's ability to reflect the progress of approved projects and the ability to track project funding based upon priority areas.

Vice Chair J. Carlvena Foster questioned the funds allocated for County Administration projects.

Oliva reviewed the County Administration projects for emergency supplies and noted funding has been fully allocated for this project.

Vice Chair Foster questioned the remaining three (3) County Administration projects.

Oliva shared the remaining projects will be brought forward to the Board, but these designated funds have been set aside to address any organizational needs.

Commissioner Kay Cashion questioned if a hard copy of the dashboard was available and staff confirmed there is no hard copy, but would share the spreadsheet via email.

B. 2022-421 UPDATE ON INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

Jason Jones, Assistant County Manager for Quality Government, provided an update on Integrated Service Delivery. He stated staff will return to the Board with specific asks for investments in the projects developed by the community partners involved in this project. Jones announced these partners would participate in a collaborative design session on August 9 and referenced the National Association of Counties (NACo) issue briefs related to the Data-Driven Justice Initiative's approach to integrated service delivery and data, which he would share with the Board.

E. 2022-423 EMT/PARAMEDIC ACADEMY EXPANSION AND FIRE ACADEMY LAUNCH

Kyle Paschal, Emergency Services Deputy Director, discussed current Emergency Medical Services (EMS) call volumes and vacancy rates. He stated that, based upon projected call volume, the department estimates forty-eight (48) positions are required to meet the volume, a total that includes their current thirty-six (36) vacant positions.

Paschal stated they will need an additional twenty (20) positions as their existing positions, even when fully staffed, do not address the expected growth in call volume.

Chairman Alston questioned if they are requesting ARPA funding to create these positions.

Paschal stated the ARPA funding is being requested to upgrade their Paramedic and EMT academies, and to create a Fire Academy to address current vacancy needs. He noted the request for additional positions will be presented to the Board at a future date.

Chairman Alston questioned the costs associated with the academies.

Paschal discussed the associated costs, which include a trainee salary of \$15.00 per hour and additional expenses, like uniforms, are covered. He confirmed the training class lasts four (4) months.

Vice Chair Foster questioned the salary difference between a trainee and certified EMT.

Paschal noted there is currently no difference in salary, but expressed hope this will change once the class & compensation study is completed.

Vice Chair Foster questioned how this compares to surrounding counties.

Paschal confirmed Guilford County is behind other entities, with regards to pay, and because Wake County set a precedent with regards to pay rates, other counties followed the trend which results in us continuing to lose employees.

Commissioner Frankie T. Jones, Jr. questioned if there is a minimum service requirement the trainee must serve upon graduation from the academy.

Paschal noted they previously required a three (3) year service commitment upon graduation, but eliminated this requirement as certain employees can create toxic environments if they decide they do not want to remain in a position.

Chairman Alston referenced the incentive bonuses approved by the Board.

Paschal confirmed a \$5,000 incentive bonus was offered to retain employees who have received their state credentials.

Chairman Alston questioned if the class & compensation study will address our pay differences multiple counties.

Jones stated staff expect to provide an update to the Board on August 18.

Paschal shared their goal to add eighty (80) employees over the next four (4) years by offering two (2) EMT academies annually, with ten (10) students per class. He noted students receive pay effective the first day of class and there is a large experiential learning component.

Chairman Alston questioned staff's plan to attract more African Americans to attend the EMT/Paramedic academies.

Paschal shared they plan to increase diversity through social media advertising, word-of-mouth from other trainees or staff, and the trainee pay incentive.

Commissioner James Upchurch spoke to the opportunity to partner with local high schools to expand the employment pipeline.

Chairman Alston requested a written plan outlining how the department will recruit more African Americans into this industry.

Paschal spoke to the opportunity to develop an Explorer program to encourage students to participate in this field.

Commissioner Cashion if there were flexible or part-time training options for those who are not ready to leave their current jobs.

Paschal spoke to the rigid schedule currently used by the training program. He spoke to training as a critical component for departmental success and their request for \$400,000 in ARPA funding to be used towards technology upgrades, the addition of a training coordinator and purchase of a training mannequin.

Vice Chair Foster thanked Paschal and the ES team and spoke to the impact of her recent ride-along experience. She spoke in support of raising salaries for these positions in order to remain competitive.

Stephen Thomas, Guilford County Fire Marshal, introduced their request for ARPA funding towards a Fire Academy that would recruit and assist fire personnel working in unincorporated parts of the county.

Chief Luke Richardson, Guil-Rand Fire Department, discussed the \$1,125,000 request towards the development of a Fire Academy. He spoke to the decrease in volunteerism and the difficulty in finding applicants for fire services. Richardson noted there has been a 67% increase in hiring full-time personnel for county fire departments and expressed hope the proposed academy will fill this need.

Chris Langham, GTCC Fire Academy Instructor, stated that, historically, vacant positions would draw approximately 1,000 applicants and spoke to the steep decline in their ability to fill vacancies, even after the COVID-19 pandemic. He spoke to the benefits of the existing Fire Academy through GTCC, but noted these candidates are being hired by other counties, cannot remain in the program while working a full-time job or are not affiliated with a fire agency.

Mr. Langham discussed the high school pipeline programs and their potential to partner with local community college programs, while increasing diversity in the field.

Chairman Alston questioned if staff would provide a budget for the \$1.125 million request.

Thomas stated the County would use ARPA funding to reimburse the non-profit county fire department trainees at a rate of \$15.00 per hour.

Chairman Alston questioned the length of the Fire Academy program.

Thomas shared the request will cover three (3) years of funding for six (6) academy classes that can graduate seventy-two (72) candidates, and noted the academy program lasts 4 ½ to 5 months.

Mr. Langham confirmed they currently average fourteen (14) applicants per session and anticipate utilizing this funding as a scholarship to increase class size.

Chairman Alston expressed his concern with paying trainees without a requirement to serve in Guilford County.

Mr. Langham shared the candidate will affiliate themselves with a fire district who will utilize ARPA funding as a scholarship to pay the trainee while they attend full-time training at the GTCC Fire Academy.

Commissioner Alan Perdue offered an example to clarify the process and stated the proposal will provide funding to the county fire department to recruit employees and send them to training. He explained the challenges associated with attracting recruits to attend training full-time.

Erris Dunston, Assistant County Manager for Strong People, clarified the candidate must be connected to a Guilford County fire department prior to acceptance into the academy. Dunston shared the request is designed to provide income to fire department candidates to attend training full-time.

The Board discussed the request.

Chief Richardson clarified that these candidates are employees and/or volunteers hired by the county fire departments, and these funds will allow them to attend training full-time.

Commissioner Cashion noted that she has received feedback from the community about their interest in serving, but cannot quit their full-time jobs to attend classes. She questioned if there is an option to include training for emergency vehicle drivers, as she understands there are not enough certified drivers in this field.

Mr. Langham this certification is typically not offered in conjunction with the fire academy, but offered separately on a quarterly basis, and spoke to changes in the requirements for this certification by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. He shared students cannot drive a fire truck, due to insurance requirements, and discussed challenges associated with the current testing requirements for the certification.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alan Perdue, and seconded by Commissioner Mary Beth Murphy, to approve the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to expand the EMT/Paramedic Academy and launch the Fire Academy, and authorize all necessary budget transfers.

Commissioner Justin Conrad expressed he could not support the motion on the floor, as this request needs to be considered in a global context. He spoke to the importance of reviewing

projects that will require reoccurring funding and noted this agenda includes no requests from the municipalities.

Commissioner Perdue clarified this request does not add County positions, but serves as a grant program that gives local county fire departments the ability to hire and pay for certifications to support their staff.

Commissioner Conrad expressed his hope that the academy would be successful and when ARPA funds were exhausted, the County would find a way to sustain the program. He reiterated his support for the program and emphasized that he was not prepared to vote on the motion until the Board had a conversation about ARPA funding, in whole.

Commissioner Perdue questioned if the intent of the agenda was to approve the projects or only discuss them.

Chairman Alston noted it was staff's intent for the Board to approve the items, but confirmed he was not prepared to vote until there was more time to conduct Q&A with staff. He expressed interest in reviewing the Fire Academy proposed budget and spoke to the importance of ensuring a successful plan was in place to sustain the program.

Commissioner Perdue expressed his willingness to rescind his motion if the Board's intent was not to vote on any items today, but requested they schedule a time to review all items.

Commissioner Upchurch noted this work session was the first time the Board had opportunity to discuss these projects and expressed his interest in hearing all opinions before voting.

Commissioner Murphy shared this is the Board's third meeting on ARPA funding and expressed concern regarding the critical nature of the pending motion. She spoke to the county fire departments need for personnel and her assumption that there was Board consensus to quickly take action on this item. Murphy spoke to the ongoing issues in the community related to these staffing shortages.

Chairman Alston noted time is of the essence for all of these projects and spoke to the need for additional work sessions over the next two (2) weeks. He reminded the Board the County Manager was not present for today's work session and expressed his interest in hearing the manager's plan of action regarding ARPA funds.

Commissioner Perdue emphasized the critical nature of Fire and EMS personnel vacancies and expressed hope that this decision would not be further delayed. He spoke to the benefits of reviewing what the County has already budgeted, what has been implemented and if there are any resulting changes. Perdue reminded the Board they approved certain items related to this request in October 2021 and earlier this year, and spoke to the importance of evaluating if improvements were observed. He reiterated his concerns with delaying the vote on this item.

Chairman Alston emphasized his concerns with the request to spend \$1.125 million without viewing an itemized budget or plan.

Vice Chair Foster expressed her agreement with all points of view and emphasized her agreement with Commissioner Conrad's comment that the Board should review all requests before making a decision.

Commissioner Jones clarified the Board has not received information on several requests, including those for municipal water, despite receiving prior staff presentations on ARPA funding proposals.

Commissioner Cashion expressed her interest in receiving information on all the requests, absorbing the details and then voting on the items.

Commissioner Alan Perdue withdrew his motion to approve the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to expand the EMT/Paramedic Academy and launch the Fire Academy, and authorize all necessary budget transfers.

By general consensus, the Board agreed to only receive information on the ARPA funding requests and not take any action during the work session.

D. 2022-422 FJC/DSS PROTECTIVE SERVICES TEAM

Sharon Barlow, DHHS-DSS Division Director, spoke to the increase in child and elder abuse cases and shared they currently have one (1) Child Protective Services (CPS) worker at each Family Justice Center (FJC) and one (1) Adult Protective Services (APS) worker split between both sites. She noted they have never had the capacity to place teams at the centers and would like to utilize ARPA funding to expand their collaboration with the FJC and enhance their response to vulnerable children and adults.

Barlow discussed the proposed specialty team that would consist of a Supervisor managing five (5) dual CPS/APS investigators and two (2) administrative support staff that would be equally split between the Greensboro and High Point centers. She confirmed they have observed a 21% increase in child abuse reports and a 30% increase in cases accepted, in addition to an 11% increase in elder abuse reports.

Catherine Johnson, FJC Director, spoke to the collaborative efforts of the FJC and noted the partnership is most successful when a supervisor and team are deployed to manage these cases. She shared that FJC and DSS staff have been discussing the need to add positions, but have been unable due to resource shortages.

Johnson discussed the impact goals the specialty team would address and spoke to the importance of having all partners in the same location to improve response, victim safety and offender accountability, and reduce staff turnover and burnout.

Chairman Alston questioned if the \$1.7 million in requested ARPA funding would last through 2026, as presented, and how long it would take to implement this program.

Barlow stated they team would initially be comprised of existing staff and they would backfill the vacancies to maintain capacity for current CPS and APS caseloads.

Chairman Alston questioned how the team would be sustained beyond the four-year funding request.

Barlow confirmed these staff salaries would be eligible for 50% reimbursement from state funding.

Chairman Alston questioned the amount of the team budget.

Barlow noted the anticipated reimbursement funding is calculated into the ARPA funding request and assumed that the 50% rate of reimbursement would not change.

Commissioner Cashion confirmed the funding request is a net amount and not for the total cost of the program. She reminded the Board that services from external partner agencies come at no cost to the County and spoke to the efficiencies realized as a result of this collaboration.

Commissioner Murphy thanked staff for presenting this proposal and expressed appreciation for models that modify service delivery to better serve our citizens. She expressed her hope that the Board would vote on these proposals soon.

E. 2022-420 UPDATE ON “EXPANDING SCHOOL-BASED TELEHEALTH TO ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY FOR CHILDREN IN GUILFORD COUNTY”

Chelsea Nooner, Project Manager for TeleHealth Project, Cone Health, introduced herself and shared the common goal of this project is to prepare students, especially disadvantaged students, for success in life. She reviewed data maps highlighting patterns of health literacy, routine care trends, school attendance, graduation rates and poverty within Guilford County.

Ms. Nooner discussed the school-based Telehealth program that opened at Bessemer Elementary in April 2021 and noted schools have been identified as a trusted space for students to receive care. She reviewed the referral process and provided an example of a typical telehealth visit.

Michelle Schneider, Vice President and Chief Philanthropy Officer for Cone Health, spoke to the transformational nature of the project and Cone Health’s expertise with tele-healthcare as an important component of this collaboration.

Ms. Schneider discussed the vision for the partnership and outlined the community and private industry interest in the project. She spoke to the shared goal of adding behavioral health services to the collaborative and confirmed they have full support from Guilford County Schools (GCS). Ms. Schneider discussed their ARPA funding request for \$2.2 million over a three (3) year period to operationalize twenty (20) telehealth clinics at Title I elementary schools, which would

allow them to provide on-demand medical care for over 9,000 students. She spoke to the importance of initially offering virtual care before adding specialty options.

Ms. Schneider shared the total start-up cost is \$6.5 million with ongoing costs of less than \$2 million, annually. She shared staff anticipate fewer early dismissals for illness, reduced burden on families related to early pick-ups and increased instructional time and school performance.

Commissioner Murphy shared her experience as a teacher managing students with illnesses and spoke to the impact upon their educational outcomes. She noted the importance of intentionally creating spaces that integrate healthcare and education in the new school buildings funding by the recently approved school bonds, and discussed piloting this program and garnering ongoing support for this new model of community healthcare.

Ms. Schneider confirmed this is an opportunity for GCS to become preeminent with regards to student healthcare best practices at the state and national levels.

Vice Chair Foster spoke to the value of the program and questioned the schools currently utilizing telehealth.

Ms. Schneider stated telehealth has been implemented in Bessemer, Cone and Foust elementary schools and discussed the opportunity to initially introduce the program into all twenty (20) Title I elementary schools in the county, with an eventual goal of offering the program in all fifty-one (51) Title I schools within GCS.

Commissioner Upchurch questioned the type of staff that would work in telehealth programs.

Ms. Schneider stated licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and certified nursing assistants (CNAs) would primarily staff the program within the schools, with registered nurses (RNs) serving as telepresenters.

Commissioner Conrad spoke to the ease of the telemedicine process versus in-person visits with doctors and noted the importance of exposing children to this type of process to create ongoing healthy behaviors.

Ms. Schneider discussed ongoing mobile medicine opportunities that could be introduced as an additional community healthcare program.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to the potential benefits of reducing emergency room (ER) visits and reducing staffing for routine visits that Cone Health would realize through this program. She questioned Cone's expenses in the project, given the benefits.

Ms. Schneider referenced in-kind contributions and grants would assist with program expansion and noted the telehealth program would be a Cone Health department staffed with Cone Health employees to advance the program. She shared they are implementing several community health programs that will be introduced into the schools, which would increase their in-kind contributions.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the itemized budget.

Oliva noted the budget information for the applications are included in the electronic workbook previously sent to the Board.

Schneider summarized the budget request for approximately \$2.2 million and noted approximately \$300,000 will be designated for technology, \$100,000 towards IT/analytics and then the remaining goes towards personnel expenses and ensuring they have sufficient supplies at the school site. She explained the billing costs and how the visit could be covered by insurance or other resources.

Commissioner Jones expressed his support for the program and questioned the difference between the \$6.5 million request and \$2.2 million ongoing expense.

Schneider noted the total \$6.5 million goes towards start-up and ongoing expenses to implement the program in fifty-one (51) schools, with \$2.2 million as an ongoing expense. She clarified that the \$6.5 million allows them to commit to implementing this model over three (3) years within the 51 schools.

Oliva provided the annual breakdown for the total request.

Chairman Alston expressed concerned with the project timeline and ARPA funding deadlines.

Oliva explained the ARPA funding deadlines and how the request falls within the guidelines.

Vice Chair Foster left the meeting at 11:33AM.

Ms. Schneider discussed the plan to implement telehealth in twenty (20) Title I elementary schools over the next three (3) years and the expectation to use all requested funding by the four-year mark.

Chairman Alston questioned how they will expand the program to a total of fifty-one (51) Title I schools and expressed concern with Cone's monetary investment in the project.

Ms. Schneider noted the requested funding will be combined with private and public donations, and spoke to the importance of other factors when implementing the program, such as parental consent.

Chairman Alston emphasized the importance of other partnerships to raise the \$6.5 million in order to expand implementation.

Ms. Schneider shared that, as lead fundraiser for the project, she felt confident they could raise the additional \$3.5 million if the County approved this request.

Chairman Alston spoke to the opportunity to create a challenge grant to gain a commitment for matching funds from Cone and other organizations in order to implement telehealth in all schools.

Nick Wilkerson, Cone Health, noted this will not be a profitable business for Cone, but will be the best program for the community.

Commissioner Jones spoke to the importance of the Board seeing the total cost of the project when evaluating pilot programs in order to leverage investments to gain a multiplier effect. He also requested information on the annual ongoing costs once ARPA funding has expired when considering future budgets.

Vice Chair Foster returned to the meeting at 11:40AM.

C. 2022-413 INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF FOSTER FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

Matt Anderson, Vice President of Business Development & Advocacy for Children's Home Society (CHS), thanked the Board for the opportunity to present their request and shared their hope to utilize ARPA funding to increase the number of foster families in Guilford County. He noted Children's Home Society is currently the largest provider of foster parent adoption services in North Carolina.

Chairman Alston, Commissioner Perdue and Commissioner Jones left the meeting at 11:40AM.

Mr. Anderson shared their request will address the need for placement of children in care by licensing foster families. He spoke to the reduction in licensed foster families and increase in children needing a foster home, since the pandemic. Anderson noted that, pre-pandemic they were able to place approximately 30% of their referrals with foster families; however, this rate has decreased to 16% within the past year.

Mr. Anderson shared this results in children no longer remaining in Guilford County, away from family and community support, being placed in a group home or alternative settings. He discussed their plan to significantly increase their recruitment and ability to license foster families.

Commissioners Perdue and Jones returned to the meeting at 11:46AM.

Mr. Anderson discussed their plan to conduct extensive, targeted marketing efforts, including direct outreach with churches and civic organizations, social media, radio, billboards and televisions, and provide support families through the application and licensing process.

Mr. Anderson stated they are requesting \$350,000 in ARPA funding to support this intensive foster family recruitment, training and licensing activities over an eighteen (18) month period and discussed the goals of increasing new inquiries, applicants and the addition of 150 new, licensed foster families that can serve approximately 125 children in care within Guilford County.

Chairman Alston returned to the meeting at 11:52AM.

Commissioner Conrad discussed the campaign conducted by the County a few years ago and requested data on the results and impact of these efforts.

Barlow reviewed the campaign and reported that, at that time, the County added fifty (50) new licensed families. She noted that while DSS does license foster families, this task is one of many responsibilities, while this is the primary role of CHS and their efforts can be much more impactful on foster family recruitment and licensing. Barlow spoke to the significant impact of direct outreach efforts in the community during the County's foster family recruitment efforts, especially visits to churches and small group interactions.

Commissioner Conrad questioned the funding amount for the campaign.

Barlow shared the source of funding was Adoption Promotion funds, but since the funding structure has changed, they do not receive the amount of funds previously received. She estimated approximately \$400,000 over a few years was allocated to the campaign.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to CHS' reputation in this field and questioned if their funding request could be reallocated to DSS for another marketing campaign.

Barlow spoke to the benefits of utilizing CHS specifically for foster family recruitment and licensing, and discussed the partnership between both agencies.

Mr. Anderson spoke to the impact of DSS having a provider network and established partnership to address this significant need within the County.

Barlow emphasized the importance of this partnership ensuring that there are sufficient options to ensure better matches are made between children and foster families.

Vice Chair Foster questioned the components of the marketing campaign and the target population.

Mr. Anderson stated there is no specific target population and shared one of the goals is to ensure the licensed foster families are representative of the diversity of children served.

Vice Chair Foster questioned if they recruit foster families from outside the County.

Mr. Anderson noted CHS is a statewide organization that recruits foster families across the state.

G. 2022-424 FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

Heather Schaffer, Cooperative Extension Director, provided an overview of the program and its model is to conduct direct outreach by meeting people in their community. She discussed the food system as a network that includes pre-production, production, consumption, loss, waste & disposal, which must work together.

Schaffer provided information on observed food insecurity rates and trends, and noted there are twenty-four (24) food deserts in Guilford County, with seventeen (17) of those located in Greensboro. She shared they are observing an increase in senior needs and a decrease in supply.

Schaffer shared the proposal is designed to fill the existing gap of creating space for network and collaboration to increase capacity and ensure providers are not working in isolation. She spoke

to the importance of food plan development as an organizational tool for providers that can also serve as a performance measure.

Schaffer provided a detailed budget review of the ARPA funding request and noted the budget is comparable to food security programs implemented in Wake and Mecklenburg counties.

Commissioner Murphy shared comments from Commissioner Cooke expressed her passionate interest in this program and noted this proposal is of great interest to providers in this field in order to amplify their ability to serve citizens and increase collaboration.

Chairman Alston noted the request notes that additional community support is contingent upon County funding and questioned if this request should be approved in the form of a challenge grant to assist in securing additional funding.

Schaffer noted there is a cost benefit to this option as there are community partners who are willing to sustain this work. She noted this type of collective partnership is dependent upon reaching goals timely, which can be challenging when working with a large collaborative. Schaffer stated there is a desire in the community invest in food security work and noted that, while a challenge grant might work, it could endanger their ability to launch the project before ARPA funding expires.

Chairman Alston expressed his interest in ensuring the sustainability of the program and funding, and that ARPA funds are used towards lasting programs.

Commissioner Cashion clarified the community wants the County to take the lead in this initiative.

Schaffer confirmed and spoke to the need for cement partnerships through collaboration and data-sharing.

H. 2022-419 UPDATE ON RECOVERY HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS (MOTHER CARE)

Gostling reminded the Board that any ARPA-funded programs, including those utilizing funding for infrastructure, must be implemented and active by December 21, 2026.

Becky Yates, Executive Director of Caring Services, Inc., provided an overview of their agency and shared they began as a shelter program for those leaving treatment, but over the years, they have morphed into a state-licensed mental health facility providing substance use disorder treatment and eight-two (82) beds for those in recovery.

Ms. Yates noted pairing treatment with recovery housing has been their key to success with this population as 85% of those entering the program have successfully completed intensive outpatient treatment. She discussed the serious need to offer recovery housing for pregnant women and mothers seeking treatment in this community.

Theresa Hinkle, Clinical Director for Caring Services, Inc., noted 30% of the women entering the treatment program have left prematurely as they cannot maintain childcare, and multiple stakeholders have encountered these same challenges. She reviewed the program goals to increase substance use disorder treatment services and safe housing for pregnant women and create a continuum of care in Guilford County specifically for women using drugs, specifically pregnant or mothering women.

Ms. Hinkle stated their interest in partnering with the high-risk obstetrics unit at Cone Health to provide pre- and postnatal care for this population and emphasized the most challenging component is housing. She shared they would like to find a facility or apartment building comprised of eight (8) housing units and an office. Hinkle discussed the model, which would include women living in independent housing units with staff available to support them in family autonomy. She noted they would have access to the recovery housing for at least a year.

Ms. Hinkle shared the women in the program would have access to substance use treatment, mental and primary healthcare, and referrals to community resources, with a goal of creating independence. She noted that, while there are similar programs throughout the state, there are none in this community which can result in women refusing treatment because it requires them to leave their support systems.

Hinkle reviewed the proposed budget and shared the Year 1 cost includes expenses for property acquisition.

Commissioner Conrad questioned if they have identified a potential site for the program.

Ms. Hinkle confirmed they have not found a facility.

Commissioner Cashion thanked them for the presentation and shared that in prior meetings with the group she was alarmed that there were no recovery housing options for women in transition. She discussed her conversations with Judge Michelle Fletcher who manages the Guilford County Substance Abuse Treatment courts, who noted they have few referral options for these individuals.

Commissioner Cashion shared she was able to speak with others doing this work during the recent NACo Annual Conference, and noted these groups are working with families in congregate settings, and spoke to the opportunity to evaluate options for these services. She questioned if Opioid funding might be a better use for this type of program, versus ARPA funding.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to the importance of taking a deeper dive into the budget as this a major gap in service that needs to be filled.

Chairman Alston shared that, since Mary's House closed, there is a significant gap in this type of service, and spoke to the challenge of finding a facility.

Ms. Yates noted the Board has received presentations from other organizations dealing with the effects of Guilford County not addressing this problem and spoke to the serious nature of the issue. She affirmed they will work with the Board in whatever way possible on this matter.

Chairman Alston shared his meeting the City of Greensboro's Mayor several weeks ago regarding concerns around the homeless population, and noted Assistant County Manager Victor Isler is working with the city to address these issues. He shared they are working on a proposal for the Board that could be potentially eligible for ARPA funding to address housing needs.

Assistant County Manager for Successful People, Victor Isler, shared this group will be meeting in early August to consider medical respite for homeless individuals discharged from hospitals who will need ongoing services and care. He spoke to the importance of providing mental health outreach and supportive services for our homeless population.

Chairman Alston requested the Board schedule a work session for the following week to address some of the less controversial requests and requested staff review these projects during mini meetings to gain consensus on certain proposals, prior to the work session. He requested the Board contact staff to get answers certain questions on proposed projects.

Commissioner Murphy spoke to significant conversations regarding the impact of the Board's decisions regarding these projects. She questioned if the Board could have access to the dashboard to mimic certain scenarios regarding these requests.

Oliva shared the Board has access to download the dashboard to mimic these funding scenarios.

Commissioner Conrad noted the Board received good information and proposals today and spoke to the need to receive presentations on municipal requests and other staff recommendations that we did not hear today.

Chairman Alston expressed his agreement with Commissioner Conrad and emphasized ideas are being presented by the local municipalities that need to be included on the recommended list.

Chairman Jones echoed Commissioner Conrad's comments and expressed his interest in seeing a more defined process to review these requests prior to approving funding.

The Board discussed scheduling a work session on August 4, 2022 at 3:00PM.

Commissioner Upchurch shared he has been contacted by several municipalities throughout the county and expressed his interest in supporting cities that did not receive ARPA funding while considering the long-term impacts on the County budget, due to recurring costs.

Vice Chair Foster spoke to several projects the Board did not have opportunity to consider, specifically some from High Point that she would like presented prior to allocating funds. She thanked Oliva for her presentation on Guilford County's ARPA program during the NACo Annual Conference.

Commissioner Cashion referenced information she received from a High Point project that she would like to be considered for ARPA funding.

Oliva stated she would share the application link with the Board for any additional projects that would like to consider.

Commissioner Perdue expressed his interest in the dashboard including information on potential economic impacts, community involvement, long-term financial impacts and if they received ARPA funding from the cities of Greensboro and/or High Point.

Commissioner Murphy left the meeting at 12:55PM.

Oliva noted none of the items included in the first pass recommendation received ARPA funding from the City of Greensboro and has not received any information from High Point on how they plan to use their funding.

Commissioner Cashion noted the Recovery Housing program could potentially result in ongoing Medicaid funding for uninsured individuals.

Chairman Jones requested staff follow-up with the cities on their ARPA funding as they may have allocated funds since their last conversations with staff.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to consider.

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 12:57PM.

Robin Keller
Clerk to Board

Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chairman