

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

Greensboro, North Carolina  
September 17 2015

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed Work Session at 3:00PM in the Blue Room at 301 West Market Street, Greensboro, N.C.

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Hank Henning, presiding; Vice Chairman, Jeff Phillips; Commissioners Justin Conrad, Alan Perdue, Kay Cashion, Alan Branson, and Ray Trapp (arrived at 3:18PM).

**ABSENT:** Commissioners Carolyn Q. Coleman and J. Carlvena Foster

**ALSO PRESENT:** County Manager Marty Lawing; Deputy County Manager Clarence Grier; Mark Payne, County Attorney; Robin Keller, Clerk to Board; Ariane Webb, Deputy Clerk to Board; Merle Green, DHHS-Public Health Director; Heather Skeens, DHHS-Department of Social Services (DSS) Director; various departmental staff; and members of the media and community.

**I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Henning called the meeting to order at 3:09PM.

**II. DRAFT HUMAN SERVICES CONSOLIDATION PLAN**

County Manager Marty Lawing introduced the item and stated that the purpose of the meeting is to review the Human Services Consolidation plan. He noted that the plan has been reviewed by the Human Services Consolidation Sub-Committee. Lawing reviewed the proposed vision, mission and core values of the new consolidated department.

Merle Green, DHHS-PH Director, stated that the mission, vision and values were compiled through feedback from the staff and were consistent with those of the County.

Lawing reviewed the proposed benchmarks.

Heather Skeens, DHHS-DSS Director, gave a general overview of the first benchmark. She discussed the development of the call center and reported that DHHS should have a consolidated call center up and running in the next 30 days.

Green also reviewed the opportunity to cross train staff in the different services offered by both departments, allowing them to direct clients to appropriate services that would meet their needs.

Skeens discussed the history of the Customer Care Center and the system client interaction with DHHS.

Green noted that even within currently siloed department's, services can be further fragmented which frustrates clients. She stated that DHHS staff are encouraged by the Customer Care Center's well-trained and well-prepared staff.

Skeens stated that additional training will begin with a newly revised employee orientation series to educate staff on all of the various services provided by the two departments.

Green discussed a recent activity where supervisory staff in both divisions attended a training event at GTCC where kiosks with information on services provided by Public Health and DSS were displayed in order to cross train the supervisory staff. She noted that this type of training will be conducted twice a year and stated a new training position has been created to work with the existing DSS trainer to develop and consolidate training opportunities.

Skeens discussed Aging & Adult Services and Children's Services and stated DHHS has developed work groups to identify overlapping services to clients assisted by both departments. She also discussed creating a contracts and purchasing team to identify duplication in contracting between the divisions, and opportunities for bulk purchases.

Commissioner Trapp stated that the County initially discussed consolidation 5 years ago, and asked what has changed between then and now.

Green noted that the group that initially reviewed consolidation briefly reviewed services and administration changes. She stated that they identified changes to specific programs. Green stated DHHS is currently reviewing funding sources and contractual arrangements to complete a more comprehensive analysis.

Commissioner Trapp questioned if the report presented addresses those changes.

Green stated that there are mechanisms to set the county up to identify and address the changes.

Commissioner Trapp stated that the report, as presented, is an excellent strategic plan but asked for a more detailed operational plan.

Skeens stated that they are looking at an approved logo and discussed consistency.

Commissioner Trapp stated that he would like all intake workers located in one facility. He noted that there is low-hanging fruit that has not been addressed, such as simply changing the signage on the building.

Chairman Henning echoed Commissioner Trapp's comments and stated he would like to look at some of the structural changes before reviewing long term benchmarks.

Green stated that staff have reviewed and worked to identify their definitions of operations, customer service and efficiencies within DHHS.

Commissioner Trapp stated that the exciting thing about consolidation is looking at efficiencies. He stated that our current DSS system is not effective because it does not move people towards self sufficiency. He acknowledged that this is a long-term conversation spanning multiple generations.

Lawing stated that that the Board can look at structural and long-term goals. He stated having a full-time Human Services Director versus a portion of the manager's time as interim, would have a direct impact on the future of the department. He stated staff are looking for feedback on the direction of the DHHS structure.

Green shared some operational consolidation goals that have been accomplished between Human Services and the IS department. She noted that staff are reviewing consolidation goals involving administration, contracted services and client service reviews. Lawing stated that they have also revised the organizational and will be discussing those as well.

Vice Chairman Phillips questioned the timeline and objectives of the DHHS work groups and requested staff provide recommendations on how to implement a better system. Phillips requested specific information on the customer care center and portal of entry. He noted that he would prefer to see in-service training versus NewHire training.

Lawing asked that the Board look at the top priorities as the focus for today's meeting.

Vice Chairman Phillips asked the Board to consider discussion regarding the management structure.

Lawing reviewed a proposed organizational chart.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the amount of time staff are spending on the plan.

Lawing stated staff are meeting weekly and will continue to work on that schedule.

Commissioner Cashion noted that she was pleased that Ms. Green and Ms. Skeens are on the same page and making progress towards full consolidation. She stated that she was happy to see cross-training and customer service as priorities in the plan.

Green reported that the model that they discussed is working and they believe they are making progress.

Commissioner Perdue encouraged the Board to view consolidation from a project perspective; and not necessarily as a Director, but an interim Project Manager working to build the new department specific to the needs of Guilford County. He questioned the single most service for clients and noted that if this service is a call center, the Board should identify what can we do to model and create such a center.

Commissioner Trapp stated he agreed with Perdue's suggestion and noted that a Director is not as necessary as is a Project Manager.

Vice Chairman Phillips discussed the benefits of this role and questioned the potential usefulness of a consultant.

Lawing shared with the Board that a lot of the work has been done, and that the County had previously looked at a consultant that could provide those services.

Commissioner Perdue questioned if staff were prepared to present a project schedule chart with time lines and outcomes.

Skeen stated yes, but noted that staff inherited a document with over 50 consolidation recommendations. She stated that staff have identified what they believe are top priorities, however there are still more recommendations to review. Skeens noted DHHS is seeking the Board's consensus on top priorities before preparing timelines.

Commissioner Perdue stated that the top priorities should be those services having the most impact upon clients.

Lawing stated that they are close to preparing timelines, should the Board agree to the priorities identified by staff.

Commissioner Trapp expressed his agreement with the development of a timeline.

Skeens reviewed the top strategic goals and explained how the recommendations were tiered to identify what is easily accomplished versus recommendations that are difficult or impossible to accomplish.

Commissioner Trapp suggested using customer input to identify how to improve business at DHHS.

Skeens continued to review the DHHS strategic goals.

Chairman Henning noted that Tier 1 recommendations should be identified as departmental priorities and that staff should develop timelines to accomplish these goals.

Lawing stated staff will focus on attaching timeframes to Tier 1 recommendations for all strategic goals, and should be prepared with an action document next month. He noted staff will present the strategic goals and recommendations to the Human Services Advisory Board next week, finalize the plan and present will submit a final plan to the Board by early October.

### **III. DHHS-PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION AGENCY GUIDELINES**

Commissioner Conrad questioned if the Board could hear the DHHS-Public Health presentation and review agency guidelines scheduled for presentation at the regular meeting, during the work session.

Mark Payne, County Attorney, verified that the public meeting notice stated "...and conduct other business...".

There was general consensus by the board to add additional items to the agenda.

Conrad informed the Board that he had reviewed and discussed the DHHS-Public Health guidelines with Ms. Green.

Green discussed the history behind the review of Public Health guidelines, and reviewed criteria typically encompassed in the guidelines. She explained the roles of the Board of Health Chair and Board of Health in approving guidelines. Green reviewed the major changes to the plan, which primarily involved changing the agency name from Public Health to DHHS. She also reviewed the new vaccine recovery plan guidelines, media coordination and updated information on the epidemiology team. Green noted that there were approximately twenty (20) major updates in the document and requested approval of the agency guidelines.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Ray Trapp and seconded by Commissioner Justin Conrad to approve the DHHS-Public Health Division Agency Guidelines.**

**VOTE: Motion carried 7-0**

**AYES: H. Henning, J. Phillips, A. Branson, K. Cashion, A. Perdue, J. Conrad, R. Trapp**

**NOES: None**

**ABSENT: C. Coleman, C. Foster**

#### **IV. DHHS- PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD OF HEALTH FOR ACCREDITATION**

Green reviewed the roles and discussed requirements for the Board of Commissioners, which now serve as the Board of Health, related to the agency's accreditation.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Ray Trapp and seconded by Commissioner Alan Branson to approve the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Health as it pertains to accreditation.**

**VOTE: Motion carried 7-0**

**AYES: H. Henning, J. Phillips, A. Branson, K. Cashion, A. Perdue, J. Conrad, R. Trapp**

**NOES: None**

**ABSENT: C. Coleman, C. Foster**

## V. HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES UPDATE

Skeens introduced Sharon Barlow as the new DHHS-DSS Children Services Division Director and referenced Jenise Davis, DHHS-DSS Aging & Adult Services Division Director; Myra Thompson, DHHS-DSS Administrative Services Director; and Elizabeth White, DHHS-DSS Economic Services Director.

Elizabeth White, DHHS-DSS Economic Services Director, provided an Economic Services update. She discussed the reduction in the Medicaid case backlog and improvements in the timely processing of FNS applications.

Commissioner Trapp questioned if these numbers were accurate.

White confirmed that the numbers were accurate.

Skeens noted that she receives notices, as well, and both review the numbers daily. She praised White for “digger deeper” when discrepancies or errors with the numbers were identified.

Commissioner Phillips questioned if there were still concerns with backlog and conversion within the NCFAST system.

White stated conversion will continue through the end of calendar year, but the agency is seeing improvements within the system and in customer service through training.

Skeens noted other programs will be introduced into the NCFAST system, including Child Services and stated Ms. Barlow is on the state implementation team and involved in system discussions.

Green discussed Clinical Services within Public Health and noted the division is in discussions with the UNC Hospital System and Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center regarding expansion of HIV care within Guilford County. She explained service deficiencies identified throughout the county, especially in High Point. Green stated that DHHS-Public Health Medical Director, Laura Bachmann, was recognized as Medical Researcher of the Year. She noted Evans Blount Community Health Center will recognize Commissioner Coleman during its 5th anniversary celebration, and will name an education room in her honor during its celebratory community health fair.

Lawing shared a citizen comment regarding county employees shopping in a local store and applying for a job during the visit. Lawing stated that upon investigation, he discovered the shopping trip involved a Work First Employment Services (WFES) Social Worker and an Employment Services client participating in the job readiness program; purchasing professional clothing and applying for a job as part of the program requirements. He stated if a commissioner received this type of complaint, the WFES program may be a potential explanation.

## **VI. ANIMAL SHELTER UPDATE**

Deputy Manager Clarence Grier provided an update on the shelter, noting that when the County assumed responsibility, the Shelter housed approximately 808 animals. He stated that, since reopening, the total number currently in the Shelter has decreased to 506 animals, including animals that have been delivered to the building. He noted that staff have euthanized 246 animals and worked with rescue groups who have taken 293 animals.

Grier stated the Guilford County received its operation license on Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and on this date, received federal and state DEA licenses for Schedule 5 drugs, contingent upon the agency's visits to the Shelter. He discussed the contract with Dr. Jamie Oliver, Veterinarian, and her staff who will work twenty (20) hours per week to evaluate all animals received by the shelter. Grier reviewed the new intake policy which requires evaluation of all animals within one (1) day of intake. He noted that this policy will prevent delays in potential adoptions and stated that rescue groups and volunteers have been very positive and helpful.

Grier stated that, through adoptions, the agency is receiving approximately \$800 per day, in addition to contributions from citizens and rescue groups. He noted that staff were working to clear up licensing and insurance issues with vehicles owned by United Animal Coalition (UAC).

Grier suggested the Board hold a work session prior to the October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 meeting to discuss Shelter operations and updates.

Grier discussed the primary instances when the Shelter had to resort to euthanasia: illness and temperament.

Commissioner Trapp questioned if staff were sure of drug licensing and the level of legal drugs that could be accepted by the Shelter.

Grier confirmed that he was very sure of licensing and noted that staff training will be held September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015 to train staff on animal handling. He spoke to the need for veterinary technician training.

Commissioner Trapp questioned status of SPOT Mobile Spay & Wellness' relationship with the Animal Shelter.

Grier stated the County wanted to ensure the clinic was cleared of any involvement with prior Animal Shelter leadership before initiating a new contract or relationship.

Commissioner Trapp expressed concern regarding the County's aggressive breed policies compared to those adopted by the State.

Grier explained the Animal Shelter's current adoption and aggressive breed policies.

Commissioner Trapp discussed the state regulations and options for temperament tests.

Grier reviewed the Shelter's current policies to determine aggression and temperament testing.

Commissioner Conrad complimented Grier on his hard work and noted that volunteers and rescue groups are returning to assist the Shelter. He encouraged the Board to engage the rescue community when determining long-term management goals.

Grier stated one (1) potential management structure for the Shelter was developing an advisory board that would include representatives from rescue groups and volunteers for their input. He noted that he recently presented to a group consisting of rescue organizations and local volunteers, and stressed the need for partnership between the shelter and community.

Commissioner Conrad thanked Grier and encouraged this engagement. He noted this relationship with volunteers and rescue groups did not under UAC leadership.

Grier thanked Rustin Logan, Animal Control Manager, and Lieutenant Chris Martin, Sheriff, for their assistance.

Chairman Henning questioned if there was a timeline to making final management decisions regarding the Shelter.

Lawing requested a work session prior to October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 regular meeting and stated staff would be prepared to present a decision at that time.

Vice Chairman Phillips questioned if temperament tests were conducted on every Pit Bull, Rottweiler and Chou at intake.

Grier stated only Pit Bulls were tested and evaluated as potentially eligible for release, as there were rescue groups prepared to adopt this breed, however there are currently no rescue groups for Rottweiler's or Chou's .

Vice Chairman Phillips suggested posting Animal Shelter updates on the Guilford County website.

Grier noted he was prepared to provide quarterly updates on the Shelter's progress.

Vice Chairman Phillips suggested monthly updates for the purposes of transparency and to keep the public informed.

Commissioner Perdue echoed Phillips' suggestion for monthly updates.

Vice Chairman Phillips noted that citizens still contact him with their concerns and monthly updates would be beneficial.

Commissioner Trapp suggested monthly updates posted via the events page on the Guilford County website.

The Board scheduled a work session for October 1, 2015 at 2:00PM.

## **VII. COUNTY MANAGER UPDATE ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES**

Lawing presented the updated organizational chart to the Board. He reviewed the new chart and its development, and noted that the current organizational chart is very complex. Lawing stated



the goal of this chart was simplifying the County structure. He noted that departments had been divided by primary reporting structure and discussed Fleet Operations transition to a stand-alone department. Lawing stated that he and Grier have discussed whether Fleet should remain contracted, or if these services should be brought in-house. He stated that if the Animal Shelter remains in-house, that Director will also report to Grier. Lawing stated that NC General Statutes require the Board to determine the organization of County government, and noted that this chart has been presented to the departmental directors.

Vice Chairman Phillips questioned if Grier should serve as interim DHHS director, since the new organizational chart lists his direct reports as Veterans Services, Child Support and the Family Justice Center, departments whose functions could fall under the umbrella of DHHS.

Commissioner Trapp commented that the Animal Shelter would likely fall within the DHHS organizational structure, as well.

Lawing noted that if the Animal Shelter is run by the County it would be consolidated with Animal Control. In addition, Lawing stated that he initially placed DHHS within his direct reporting structure because of his role in consolidation from its conception.

Vice Chairman Phillips stated that he was not questioning Lawing's role and thanked him for his leadership during the transition, but noted that since the majority of DHHS-related departments fell under Grier, he would be easy fit for the DHHS director role.

Chairman Henning noted there would be no silos barring communication between Lawing and Grier regarding consolidation.

Lawing suggested true DHHS consolidation should include Veterans Services and Child Support and these were goals that could be implemented down the road.

Commissioner Trapp noted that these departments all work together and would make sense to have related services under the DHHS umbrella.

Vice Chairman Phillips suggested the title of an Internal Services director for the County.

Lawing noted some counties employed an Administrative Services Director, and stated that IS normally fell within their reporting structure. Lawing stated he felt Grier had the experience to work with IS and feels the new organizational chart will work.

Commissioner Branson expressed his appreciation of the chart's visual representation of open dialogue between the County Manager and the Deputy Manager, and noted that this is best for the County and morale.

Vice Chairman Phillips questioned if the representation of Guilford County Citizens existed on previous charts

Robin Keller, Clerk to Board, stated that this was not displayed on prior organizational charts.

Commissioner Perdue noted the chart clearly identifies who completes evaluations for each department head. He stated this is essential in creating an even distribution of work.

Commissioner Cashion complimented staff on the organizational chart and noted how encouraged she is by their openness and sharing. She noted that employees have expressed to her they feel the open communication and know who to contact with concerns or questions.

There being no further business, the Board voted to adjourn by unanimous consent at 5:11pm.

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Paul Henry "Hank" Henning, IV, Chairman

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Clerk to Board