

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS
OF GUILFORD COUNTY**

Greensboro, North Carolina
September 21, 2016

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed work session on September 21, 2016 at 3:00PM in the Blue Room located on the first floor of the Old County Courthouse, 301 W. Market St., Greensboro, North Carolina.

PRESENT: Chairman Jeff Phillips, presiding; Vice Chairman Alan Branson (in at 3:20PM); Commissioners Carolyn Q. Coleman, Hank Henning, Alan Perdue, Justin Conrad, J. Carlvena Foster (in at 3:20PM) and Ray Trapp.

ABSENT: Commissioner Kay Cashion.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Marty Lawing; County Attorney Mark Payne, Deputy County Manager Clarence Grier; Robin Keller, Clerk to Board; Michael Halford, Budget Director; Golden LEAF applicants; members of the community and media.

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

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

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Golden LEAF Foundation Community-Based Grantsmaking Initiative Letters of Inquiry

County Manager Marty Lawing shared the purpose of the work session is to review the Golden LEAF Foundation Grant Letters of Inquiry. He confirmed the County began working on the process in October and noted the number of letters received both prior to, and after, the deadline. Lawing stated the goal is to select no more than three (3) applications to submit to the Golden Leaf Foundation. He noted that, after selection, there will need to be some minor refinements to the application, prior to submission of the finalist.

Lawing confirmed staff have consulted the Golden LEAF Foundation and reviewed the projects. He noted that the Foundation President provided favorable reviews on a few of the projects.

Commissioner Coleman questioned the outcome if the Board of Commissioners opted to submit applications on a project that did not receive a favorable review.

Lawing reported the final decision lies with the Golden LEAF Board and could not speak to the amount of weight granted to the President's recommendation.

Chairman Phillips questioned if multiple requests were made and one of the requests were denied, would the allocation increase for the remaining applicants.

Lawing stated this decision would be made by the Golden LEAF Foundation, but it was his understanding that applicants should adhere to the originally submitted funding requests.

Chairman Phillips cautioned the Board regarding potential selection of programs with weak ratings for this grant, to maximize Guilford County's opportunity for funding.

Vice Chairman Branson and Commissioner Foster arrived to the meeting at 3:20PM.

Lawing stated he did follow-up with the applicants and shared the feedback received from Golden LEAF. He noted the information from Golden LEAF is not reflective of the merits of all submitted projects, but a tool to identify if these projects meet the goals of this grant.

Lawing reviewed the staff ranking of the projects and questioned if the Board wished to consider input regarding applications received after the deadline.

Commissioner Conrad questioned if the Board should begin with review of the applications that received favorable recommendations from Golden LEAF.

Commissioner Foster spoke in support of reviewing applications received after the deadline.

Commissioner Coleman echoed Commissioner Conrad's interest in beginning the review with applications that were recommended by Golden LEAF, and also expressed interest in considering all applications received by staff.

Lawing introduced the first Letter of Inquiry from Guilford County Schools (GCS) Workforce of the Future and reviewed the proposal.

Commissioner Trapp questioned if participants would receive salaries while in program.

GCS staff confirmed salaries would be offered.

Commissioner Coleman questioned the \$500 program fee.

GCS staff stated they discovered teachers who have invested in the initiative will complete the program, and noted the fee is reinvested into the classroom towards books and materials.

Chairman Phillips noted the grant applicants must also provide a minimum 20% funding match.

GCS staff reported the district-wide attrition rate is 15%; however, their attrition rate is only 11%.

Chairman Phillips questioned the average years of participant workforce experience.

GCS staff noted they do not have this data, but confirmed the program has a variety of licensed teachers.

Lawing introduced the next project with favorable recommendations from Golden LEAF as Guilford Technical Community College's (GTCC) proposal to expand capacity at the Center for Advanced Manufacturing.

Commissioner Conrad questioned if they could address concerns regarding the current job market and the lack of qualified employees.

Dr. Randy Parker, GTCC President, stated that regardless of the funding source, they will need to increase the Center's capacity; particularly to meet market demand for students skilled in 3D printing. He confirmed manufacturers, and some dental offices, are interested in utilizing this technology.

Commissioner Coleman questioned the need for the welding component of the program.

Dr. Parker stated GTCC is unable to meet the short-term demand for training in machining and welding, due to the small size of the welding shop. He confirmed the majority of their students are employed adults.

Commissioner Henning spoke to the increased demand for qualified welders in the workforce.

Commissioner Trapp questioned GTCC's access to training funds for on-the-job training programs.

Dr. Parker confirmed students in these programs are eligible for, and have access to, PELL funding. He noted short-term industry training is targeted to the specific industry needs.

Chairman Phillips noted the 3D printing funding request is \$350,000, and, per the Golden LEAF Foundation, was recommended for further review.

Dr. Parker stated they would not recommend lowering the original request of \$1 million, but would adjust the application and allow these funds to offset the potential costs of equipment needed for the program.

Chairman Phillips noted the total allocation is \$1.5 million and asked if GTCC would be flexible with this amount, if the Board chose to submit additional projects.

Dr. Parker confirmed their flexibility with the allocation.

Lawing stated that the total requested amount for the two (2) projects reviewed is over \$2 million.

Chairman Phillips introduced the proposal from Elon University Law School and stated they are requesting \$520,000 to expand free legal services to entrepreneurs. He reviewed the specifics of the grant request and shared the concerns expressed by the Golden LEAF Foundation. Phillips noted Elon staff had indicated their willingness to scale back the request, if needed.

Commissioner Conrad questioned if any community partners had offered commitments to support the project.

Luke Bierman, Elon University Law School Dean, stated this is a priority project for the Board of Directors.

Chairman Phillips questioned funding sources.

Mr. Bierman confirmed this project is currently funded solely by the law school.

Chairman Phillips questioned if the Board had an opportunity to review the other projects and their interest in further discussion.

Lawing reviewed the joint proposal from Bennett College and NC A&T State University. He noted their goal is to align courses to match the needs of employers and recommend training to high school teachers.

Due to other meeting conflicts, representatives from Bennett College and NC A&TSU were unavailable.

Commissioner Trapp noted similarities between the job training initiatives proposed by GCS, GTCC, Bennett College and NC A&T State University, and spoke to the need for collaboration between these entities.

Commissioner Coleman questioned the grant deadlines.

Lawing stated that the Letters of Inquiry, along with the County letter of support, are due at the end of the month, and noted that staff would work with the selected programs to ensure all grant application requirements were satisfied.

Commissioner Coleman echoed Commissioner Trapp's suggestion of submitting a collaborative project.

Dr. Parker confirmed GTCC will continue to collaborate with the other educational units, but spoke to the difficulty in submitting a collaborative proposal prior to the Foundation deadline.

Commissioner Henning expressed his concerns with the lack of detail in the Bennett College/NC A&TSU request, but spoke to the benefits of the program and noted his interest in receiving further information.

Lawing reviewed Golden LEAF grants program process and stated the next opportunity for project submission would be approximately four (4) years. He noted the success of current grant submissions would dictate the County's success in securing future funding.

Michael Halford, Budget Director, noted that the organization is not precluded from applying for alternative funding if the County did not support their grant application.

Lawing reviewed the proposal for the Southwest High Point Greenway Business Park, and noted the Foundation expressed concerns with the project's focus on planning, which is not a focus area, and its lack of funding for construction.

A representative for the group confirmed they did speak with the Foundation and received their concerns regarding the project; and noted the Foundation informed the group they had not funded similar projects in the past. The representative acknowledged the potential challenges in attaining funding through the Golden LEAF grant, and discussed their plan to seek alternative funding options

Commissioner Foster commented on the difficulties in addressing action items without completing the planning process, and spoke to the challenges associated with this grant opportunity.

Commissioner Trapp spoke to the history of urban counties receiving grant funding, and questioned the Foundation's interest in Guilford County.

Lawing stated the Foundation's focus for this grant cycle included regions heavily affected by decreased tobacco production, and noted Guilford County meets their criteria for consideration.

Commissioner Conrad noted the remaining eight (8) projects may not meet Golden LEAF's criteria for this grant cycle, and expressed his desire to focus on those projects recommended by the Foundation, if the grant opportunity returns to Guilford County within the next four (4) years. He opined on the merits of all the projects presented to the Board.

Chairman Phillips spoke to the strength of the proposals from GCS, GTCC and Elon University Law School.

Mr. Bierman confirmed the Elon Law initiative is currently located in the Nussbaum Center for stated that they do have physical locations in the Nussbaum Center for Entrepreneurship, in close proximity to newly developing businesses. He noted they advise on corporate structure, financing and intellectual property rights.

Commissioner Foster requested review of the proposal submitted by the Sit-In Movement, Inc.

John Swaine, CEO of the International Civil Rights Center and Museum (ICRCM) stated the primary purpose of the center is to attract people to the downtown area, and reviewed the proposal to attract student visits to downtown. He noted an additional component of the proposal included educators and retired teachers traveling to rural areas to encourage student field trips to the center.

Commissioner Trapp shared his experiences attending a tour at the ICRCM, and noted that the other grant submissions were for projects outside of the Greensboro area.

Mr. Swaine stated the museum as an attraction stimulates utilization of small businesses and restaurants in the area.

Lawing reported the feedback he received from the Foundation regarding this proposal and noted tourism and cultural resources were not areas of focus for this grant.

Halford shared the Foundation's concern that, while the proposal does impact economic development, it does not affect regional development, which is considered a priority for the grant.

Commissioner Coleman stated economic development requires out-of-the-box ideas, and noted African-American education is not taught in main-stream public schools. She expressed concerns with the lack of diversity in government funding, and stated the ICRCM proposal significantly impacts surrounding businesses.

Chairman Phillips reviewed the GCS proposal and spoke to the element of urgency surrounding workforce development. He questioned the timeframes associated with the program's impact upon the local workforce.

Commissioner Perdue shared all the proposals are valuable to the community and noted the need to review the specifics of each grant when applying for funding. He spoke to the County's responsibility to remain realistic when communicating with applicants, to maximize their likelihood of success, and expressed his desire to offer support to the other programs proposals.

Motion was made by Commissioner Justin Conrad, seconded by Vice Chairman Alan Branson, to submit letters of inquiry from Guilford County Schools Workforce of the Future and GTCC's Increasing Capacity for the Center of Advanced Manufacturing (ICCAM), along with a letter of support from staff, to the Golden LEAF Foundation for consideration in the grantsmaking initiative.

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| VOTE: | Motion carried 8 - 0 |
| AYES: | Jeff Phillips, Alan Branson, Carolyn Q. Coleman, Justin Conrad, Alan Perdue, J. Carlvena Foster, Ray Trapp, Hank Henning |
| NOES: | None |
| ABSENT: | Kay Cashion |

Chairman Philips expressed his appreciation to staff for the time invested in working closely with the Golden LEAF Foundation to vet submitted proposals.

Commissioner Coleman expressed concerns with the process of vetting the grants through the Foundation, and questioned the ultimate role of the Commissioners.

Chairman Phillips recommended staff share Commissioners' feedback with the Foundation.

Lawing reported the Foundation's recommendation to encourage the Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) apply for alternative funding options for its Regional Investment Fund proposal.

Michael Blair with PTRC, confirmed the group is seeking preliminary letters of support for a regional program.

Lawing stated the proposal would be presented as a collaboration between six (6) counties.

Mr. Blair noted the Golden LEAF Foundation requested letters of support and stated the group would submit an application to the Foundation for the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Revolving Loan Fund program for small businesses.

Lawing stated this application would not require matching funds from the County.

Blair reviewed which counties have expressed interest in offering support, and noted the deadline for the application is September 30, 2016.

Commissioner Conrad left the meeting at 4:42PM.

Commissioner Coleman questioned how funds would be disbursed to the participating counties.

Blair stated the PTRC Loan Fund Committee would review applications and work with the counties to develop a plan and policies that would address funding disbursement.

By general consensus, the Board chose to allow staff to straw poll Commissioners for approval once the letter of support, and accompanying information, is ready for signature, within the deadline requirements.

There being no further business, the Board adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 4:47PM.

Jeffrey M. Phillips
Chairman

Robin B. Keller
Clerk