

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

Greensboro, North Carolina  
November 5, 2020

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed Work Session at 3:30PM in the McAdoo Conference Room located on the third floor of the BB&T Building, 201 W. Market St., Greensboro, NC.

**PRESENT:** Chairman Jeff Phillips, presiding; Vice Chairman Alan Perdue (in at 3:53PM); Commissioners Alan Branson, Kay Cashion, Hank Henning, Melvin “Skip” Alston, and Justin Conrad. Participating via virtual communication: Commissioners J. Carlvena Foster (in at 4:10PM) and Carolyn Q. Coleman.

**ABSENT:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** County Manager Marty Lawing; County Attorney Mark Payne; Deputy County Manager Clarence Grier; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; J. Leslie Bell, Planning & Development Director; various members of County staff and media. Virtual participation was made available to the general public and the media.

**I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jeff Phillips welcomed those present and called the meeting to order at 3:48PM.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. UPDATE ON GUILFORD COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE**

Chairman Phillips introduced the item and provided background detailing how the initial conversations around the continuum of care model. He referenced a prior letter sent to US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Ben Carson that led to the development of a working group of staff and commissioners. Chairman Phillips shared that this group began discussing the potential negative impacts of a rift in the Guilford County Continuum of Care (CoC) and its affect upon services for homeless individuals throughout the county. He introduced Dr. Pamela Palmer, Chair of the Board of Directors for the Guilford County CoC, Brian Hahne, Executive Director of Partners Ending Homelessness, and Lindy Garnett, Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA.

Dr. Palmer reviewed the structure of the CoC and shared they currently have a fifty-plus membership-based network whose mission is to prevent and end homelessness in Guilford County. She noted the group operates under a written charter and HUD guidelines, and they are one of twelve CoC's located throughout the state.

Dr. Palmer discussed CoC strategies, their interest in maintaining a county-wide group that includes the City of Greensboro and the impact of separation. She stated the membership met to discuss its future and voted to request the County assume the role of collaborative applicant. Dr. Palmer reviewed the breakdown of the vote regarding the collaborative applicant role and the CoC's timeline since April 2020. She shared the group's efforts to manage the impact of COVID-19 upon the county's homeless population, as well as the City of Greensboro's request to establish a separate CoC.

Mr. Hahne spoke to Partners Ending Homelessness' current role as Collaborative Applicant for the CoC.

Commissioner J. Carlvena Foster joined the meeting via virtual communication at 4:10PM.

Mr. Hahne reviewed the four functions of the role and emphasized that the CoC is a network where the membership elects a board that identifies an agency, or agencies, to complete administrative functions.

Commissioner Carolyn Q. Coleman joined the meeting via virtual communication at 4:15PM.

Ms. Garnett spoke to the transient nature of the homeless population and shared it was not uncommon for them to cross boundaries between cities or counties. She stated the CoC should not have boundaries when providing access to care and expressed her concerns regarding the potential challenges in providing cohesive services to this population if the City of Greensboro created a separate CoC. Garnett stated a two-system continuum is not ideal and confirmed decisions should be made in the best interest of the community, as a whole.

Garnett shared the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed overlapping services provided by the continuum and the county, such as Public Health and Social Services, and a collaboration between the CoC and an organization statutorily mandated to provide these services, makes sense. She noted if the City of Greensboro created its own CoC, they also would have to engage with the County, as they do not provide these services. Garnett expressed her support for the request to have the County serve in the collaborative applicant role.

County Manager Marty Lawing reviewed the role of the collaborative applicant and noted CoC's are not required to be legal entities. He recommended designating Partners Ending Homelessness as an administrative agent while the County transitions into the new role. Lawing discussed the next steps once the County became collaborative applicant.

Vice Chairman Alan Perdue expressed his support for the model and shared his experiences with Emergency Services and citizens preference for overlapping services. He provided the examples of the Family Justice Center (FJC) and Behavioral Health Crisis Center as one-stop shops for citizens.

Commissioner Coleman questioned if there had been discussion with the City of Greensboro regarding this one-stop shop concept to provide services for our homeless population.

Chairman Phillips noted the current CoC model would not change and the City of Greensboro would remain part of the membership.

Dr. Palmer confirmed.

Commissioner Coleman questioned who provided services for the homeless population in the unincorporated areas of the county. She encouraged designating an entity that could assist in providing these services.

Dr. Palmer emphasized that the request for the County to serve as the collaborative applicant would not change our homeless population accesses services like Public Health or Social Services.

Commissioner Coleman provided the example of homeless citizens requiring housing during a snowstorm and questioned who would provide this assistance.

Dr. Palmer shared the pathway to assistance would be dependent upon which agency the individual initially approached. She stated that if the person visited Public Health for assistance, as a member of the CoC network, Public Health would reach out to the entities that could address the needs of the individual, whether it was a non-profit or local government.

Commissioner Coleman questioned how the individual would access the services.

Dr. Palmer stated how the individual accessed the service is dependent upon how the CoC learns that they need a service.

Commissioner Foster noted that High Point, specifically her district, housed the largest population of homeless individuals and shared the High Point City Council adopted a resolution in support of the Guilford County CoC remaining a unified, county-wide network. She stated that, after learning about the current structure of the CoC, she absolutely supported the County serving as the CoC collaborative applicant to ensure we maintain the same high level of service provision.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Kay Cashion, and seconded by Commissioner Justin Conrad, to approve Guilford County assuming the role of Collaborative Applicant for the Guilford County Continuum of Care (CoC); authorize staff to take all necessary measures to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the CoC and Partners Ending Homelessness to facilitate the transition; to take all reasonable and necessary actions to file a new Collaborative Applicant profile and complete the CoC program registration in *e-snaps*; and establish a position to help coordinate program activities.**

Commissioner Cashion spoke to the motion and noted she has been a member of the CoC board for almost two (2) years, but has not taken an active role in board decisions due to recent actions in the past few months. She shared the case has been made that the County should assume the collaborative applicant position and expressed her appreciation for the work of Partners Ending Homelessness, as well as Dr. Palmer's leadership. Cashion spoke to the importance of providing service to all in need, regardless of their location.

Commissioner Alston requested clarification regarding how the Board would move forward.

Lawing stated the County will enter into an MOU with the CoC and an administrative agreement with Partners Ending Homelessness. He shared the motion includes establishing a new position and he recommended this position housed under the Department of Health & Human Services.

Commissioner Alston questioned the status of the City of Greensboro regarding the CoC.

Lawing shared the City of Greensboro is seeking to create their own CoC while the County is only pursuing collaborative applicant status at the request of the Guilford County CoC.

Chairman Phillips clarified if the City chose to separate and create its own CoC, the decision would be approved or disapproved by HUD.

Commissioner Alston questioned the outcome of these instances in other parts of the country.

Chairman Phillips noted HUD documented this situation has occurred in three or four areas across the country, but not in North Carolina. He shared this option is not recommended by HUD as it presents significant challenges and is not in the best interest of those being served.

Commissioner Alston questioned any attempts at discussion with City of Greensboro.

Dr. Palmer shared that once they learned of the city's interest in exploring separation, she requested a meeting which led to a meeting with the mayor, three (3) councilmembers and city and CoC committee staff. She shared that, since the meeting, City of Greensboro and CoC staff have receive technical assistance from HUD consultants. Dr. Palmer stated that, as of today, she is unsure if they have decided to proceed with a separate application, but have planned another meeting with HUD consultants and city staff. She confirmed the City Council has not taken any action, to date.

Commissioner Alston questioned the potential to continue working with the City of Greensboro as a member of the CoC.

Dr. Palmer shared she has reached out to City councilmembers and staff to continue discussions without technical assistance from HUD, but has not received a response.

Commissioner Alston questioned if the County had contacted city staff regarding the CoC.

Lawing shared his brief conversations with two (2) city staff regarding their evaluation of feasibility of creating their own CoC, and the potential for future discussions if they chose to remain a member of the Guilford CoC.

Chairman Phillips opined on the uncertainty regarding the impact upon the CoC should the City of Greensboro choose to create a separate entity. He spoke to the County's responsibility to assist the CoC membership in moving forward and the potential positive impact of the collaborative applicant role.

Commissioner Conrad noted this is an example where increasing the size of an organization results in efficiencies due to the transient nature of the population, and the services and groups involved. He spoke to the trend of larger CoC's as shrinking the programs reduces services.

Commissioner Coleman questioned the opportunity to have a conversation with City of Greensboro.

Commissioner Conrad expressed his agreement with Commissioner Coleman and noted there is a seat at the table for the City, regardless of their decision. He shared the motion on the floor is in the best interest of all Guilford County citizens.

Commissioner Alston echoed his agreement and expressed his interest in having a conversation with the City of Greensboro and HUD regarding the need to remain a unified CoC.

Chairman Phillips reiterated HUD's position against separate CoC's within a county, and expressed his willingness to continue working with the City of Greensboro.

Commissioner Cashion noted that the motion on the floor places the County in a position to have a conversation with the City of Greensboro, and gives both entities an opportunity to work together.

**Commissioner Carolyn Q. Coleman requested a friendly amendment to the motion on the floor to include a conversation with the City of Greensboro. Commissioner Kay Cashion rejected the friendly amendment.**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Kay Cashion, and seconded by Commissioner Justin Conrad, to approve Guilford County assuming the role of Collaborative Applicant for the Guilford County Continuum of Care (CoC); authorize staff to take all necessary measures to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the CoC and Partners Ending Homelessness to facilitate the transition; to take all reasonable and necessary actions to file a new Collaborative Applicant profile and complete the CoC program registration in *e-snaps*; and establish a position to help coordinate program activities.**

**VOTE: Motion carried 9-0**

**AYES: Jeff Phillips, Alan Perdue, Alan Branson, Justin Conrad, J. Carlvena Foster, Carolyn Q. Coleman, Kay Cashion, Melvin "Skip" Alston, Hank Henning**

**NOES: None**

Chairman Phillips thanked Dr. Palmer, Ms. Garnett and Mr. Hahne for their efforts.

Commissioner Coleman shared she was aware of individuals interested in serving on the CoC board.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Carolyn Q. Coleman, and seconded by Commissioner Melvin “Skip” Alston, to continue conversations with the City of Greensboro regarding the Guilford County Continuum of Care (CoC).**

**VOTE: Motion carried 9-0**

**AYES: Jeff Phillips, Alan Perdue, Alan Branson, Justin Conrad, J. Carlvena Foster, Carolyn Q. Coleman, Kay Cashion, Melvin “Skip” Alston, Hank Henning**

**NOES: None**

#### **C. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS CENTER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Chairman Phillips introduced the modifications to the Behavioral Health Crisis Center Oversight Board which include expanding the membership of the group from eight (8) to ten (10) individuals, to include two (2) commissioners. He nominated Commissioner Cashion and Vice Chairman Perdue as Commissioner representatives and requested the Board consider moving him to the Mental Health Community Representative position, as he will leave the Board effective December 7. Phillips also recommended the Board consider Anthony Ward as the Sandhills Center designee. He questioned if the Board had any objections to the modifications, as presented.

There being none, Chairman Phillips questioned if the Board objected Commissioner Cashion and Vice Chairman Perdue serving as Commissioner representatives and his serving in the role of Community representative.

Commissioner Alston shared he had no concerns with the presented recommendations, but questioned the joint appointment requirement for the Mental Health Community Representative position.

Chairman Phillips noted Cone Health must also confirm his appointment to the committee.

County Attorney Mark Payne shared the Board of Commissioners offers a nomination, and if accepted by Cone Health, the nominee is appointed to the committee.

Commissioner Alston questioned if the appointment authority lies with the Oversight Board versus the Board of Commissioners and Cone Health.

Payne stated the Board of Commissioners has authority to recommend someone to the Oversight Board to serve in this position, and the committee will have the final vote for appointment.

Commissioner Coleman questioned how membership for the committee was determined.

Chairman Phillips clarified the committee was part of the agreement with Cone Health to provide oversight for the Behavioral Health Crisis Center.

Commissioner Coleman questioned the types of committee appointments and who makes those appointments.

Chairman Phillips reviewed the board appointments and noted the County has four (4) appointees, which include two (2) Commissioners, the Health & Human Services Director and Emergency Services Director.

Vice Chairman Perdue recommended amending the language for the Mental Health Community Representative to "...appointed jointly by the Behavioral Health Oversight Committee. Guilford County and Cone Health will submit a recommendation for the Mental Health Community Representative."

Commissioner Coleman questioned if the changes to this wording will need to be approved by Cone Health.

Chairman Phillips confirmed and Payne shared his belief Cone Health would not oppose the changes or the recommendation of Chairman Phillips serving in the Community Representative position once he is no longer on the Board.

The Board discussed when the Oversight Board would initially convene and the nomination process.

Commissioner Alston requested clarification regarding the term limits for the Board.

Payne stated the Cone Health CEO, Commissioner representatives and Mental Health Community Representative would serve three (3) year terms with no term limits. The remaining members are designated by position, so whomever is filling those roles will serve on the board.

Commissioner Foster questioned if Commissioners who lost an election would still be allowed to serve on the board in a non-Commissioner role.

Payne clarified that another Commissioner must then fill the role.

**Motion made by Vice Chairman Alan Perdue, and seconded by Commissioner J. Alan Branson, to approve the modifications to Exhibit B for the Behavioral Health Crisis Center Oversight Board; nominate Commissioner Kay Cashion and Vice Chairman Alan Perdue to serve as Commissioner representatives on the Oversight Board; and recommend Jeff Phillips serve as Mental Health Community Representative on the Oversight Board upon his retirement from the Board of Commissioners effective December 7, 2020.**

**VOTE: Motion carried 9-0**

**AYES: Jeff Phillips, Alan Perdue, Alan Branson, Justin Conrad, J. Carlvena Foster, Carolyn Q. Coleman, Kay Cashion, Melvin “Skip” Alston, Hank Henning**

**NOES: None**

## **B. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW OF DRAFT UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

J. Leslie Bell, Planning & Development Director, provided a brief overview of the Unified Development Ordinance and associated changes. He shared he would recommend the ordinance become effective immediately, but would request the County allow the old ordinance to remain effective for one (1) year to allow flexibility if there is an error or oversight, to avoid delaying any development.

## **D. COVID-19 STAKEHOLDERS MEETING**

Commissioner Alston shared a letter received from NCDHHS identifying Guilford County as a large county with a high COVID-19 infection rate. He expressed his interested in forming a task force to include mayors, police chiefs, Board of Education Chair, School Superintendent, Emergency Services and Human Services Director, Cone Health representatives and county staff to identify and better address infection hot spots. Alston shared this would not be a formal task force, but a working group that would meet to discuss these issues.

Commissioner Conrad spoke to the need to involve the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee chair on this group, to assist in addressing congregate living issues.

Vice Chairman Perdue noted that under the Guilford County Emergency Operations Plan, the Board has the authority to direct staff to create these types of groups to address and mitigate issues, which does not require formal action of the Board.

**By general consensus, the Board directed staff to form a COVID-19 task group to identify and address COVID-19 challenges.**



**III. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business to discuss.

**IV. ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:27PM.

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Jeffrey M. Phillips  
Chairman

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Robin Keller  
Clerk to Board