

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

Greensboro, North Carolina  
June 9, 2021

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed Work Session at 3:00PM in the Blue Room located on the first floor of the Old County Courthouse, 301 W. Market St., Greensboro, NC.

**PRESENT:** Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston, presiding; Commissioners Mary Beth Murphy, Carly Cooke, Kay Cashion, Justin Conrad, James Upchurch, Carolyn Q. Coleman, and Alan Perdue. Participating via virtual communication: Vice Chairman J. Carlvena Foster.

**ABSENT:** None.

**ALSO PRESENT:** County Manager Michael Halford; Assistant County Manager Jason Jones; County Attorney Mark Payne; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; Jessica Wolf, Deputy Clerk to Board; Alex Smith, Budget, Management & Evaluation Director; and media. Virtual participation was made available to the general public and media.

**I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston welcomed those present and called the meeting to order at 3:03PM.

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

County Manager Halford reviewed the FY 2022 Budget Work Session handout and provided some context regarding Guilford Technical Community College’s request and recommended funding.

**A. GUILFORD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE (GTCC)  
FUNDING REQUEST & RECOMMENDED BUDGET**

Dr. Anthony Clarke, President of GTCC, thanked the Board for their continued support of GTCC. Overall, the County Commissioners have provided a strong level of support for GTCC faculty, staff, and students. He shared that his goal for future funding is to focus on employees. Dr. Clarke noted that the recommendation does cover the salary increase, but it does not cover medical insurance or the state retirement increase. He stated that they need another \$18,000 to pay the retirement funds and an additional \$37,000 for the medical insurance increase. They are also seeking \$240,000 for matching funds for employee voluntary retirement plans.

Dr. Clarke asked the board to consider a \$296,097 increase in additional funding in order to fully fund the employee's salary and benefits.

Commissioner Coleman questioned the pay for hourly workers and if GTCC had a plan to increase pay to \$15.00 per hour?

Dr. Clarke stated that is the plan over the next two years.

Commissioner Cooke questioned where the funds come from for capital funding.

Dr. Clarke stated that the County is responsible for funding the capital needs for community college, and that's across all of North Carolina.

Commissioner Cooke asked what the capital request was for.

Dr. Clarke stated that there are three requests and he reviewed in detail the three projects.

Commissioner Upchurch echoed the goal to raise the minimum wage to \$14.00, he asked what the cost would be to raise the funds to \$15.00.

Dr. Clarke stated that he would provide those figures to the Board.

Commissioner Cashion stated that the House and the Senate both have 7% in the budget projected.

Dr. Clarke clarified that it is simply a bill proposing 7%, but that they have not seen it in any budget proposals.

Dr. Clarke provided an update on the Federal funds. He noted that the Community College has received funds through the CARES Act, CRRSAA, and the American Rescue Plan. He noted that they do receive the funds in two portions. One to the student and the other to the institution. He noted that students will receive checks during the first semester of school with no requirements. He stated that as they look at the distribution of the grants, they ensure that the distribution is reflective of the demographics of the community. Dr. Clarke reiterated that GTCC is using their Federal funds to remove obstacles so that students can be successful. He noted that they have currently waived all student fees and that they are allowed to discharge debt for students who have incurred debt during the National State of Emergency.

Dr. Clarke reviewed the GEER funding for work force/ continuing education students which allow them to pay up to \$750 for students to take certificate courses.

Dr. Clarke shared that the longleaf commitment for 2021 is the state will pay tuition for two years of free tuition for degree-seeking students.

Commissioner Upchurch stated that GTCC is receiving \$28 Million in institutional funds, he questioned if those funds can be used for capital projects.

Dr. Clarke clarified that no, they are not allowed to be used for capital expenses.

Commissioner Upchurch asked if there were funding options for those who dropped out during the pandemic.

Dr. Clarke stated that they are reaching out to those who have applied but not registered for classes and students who struggled with online learning. They are planning to be fully open for face-to-face classes in the fall.

Commissioner Upchurch questioned the drop-out rate during the pandemic.

Dr. Clarke stated that there was a slight increase in dropouts but noted the programs that continued to have face-to-face classes during the pandemic.

Commissioner Coleman questioned additional advertising options.

Dr. Clarke spoke to their outreach efforts and offered to share their printed information, and he noted the information for the programs is on their website for those interested.

Commissioner Perdue questioned what new students need to do and what is the criteria.

Dr. Clarke stated that as a part of the application program, you need to complete the FAFSA and, once completed, they are eligible for the long leaf commitment. He noted that there are some additional criteria as well.

Chairman Alston asked for clarification on the Longleaf Commitment and fees. He questioned the institutional portion of the funding and if all of that will be disbursed with the outlined programs in the handout.

Dr. Clarke stated that 1/3 of their allocations are going directly to students. He noted that they have used institutional funds for other items, such as debt reduction, student fees, HVAC upgrades, and exterior wi-fi.

Chairman Alston questioned if there are any remaining funds.

Dr. Clarke stated that the CARES and CRRSAA funds have been exhausted, they are now working on the ARP funds.

Chairman Alston requested an itemized budget for their funding plans. He questioned if these funds could be used to cover the employee salary and benefit needs.

Dr. Clarke noted the different funding rules they have to follow for the CARES, CRRSAA, and ARP funds.

Vice Chairman Foster shared that these are great programs that GTCC is offering to remove barriers so that students can achieve their education goals. She asked for clarification on State and Federal dollars not covering all costs.

Dr. Clarke reviewed that the colleges do not retain their annual tuitions. They get an annual allocation of funding from the state based on admission.

Vice Chairman Foster questioned if the state funds could be used for capital.

Dr. Clarke stated that state funds cannot be used for capital unless through a state Bond.

## **B. FY 2020-21 BUDGET STATUS UPDATE & YEAR-END PROJECTIONS**

Halford gave a detailed overview of revenue and end-of-year projections.

Halford reviewed our property tax collection rates and noted that we are doing better in motor vehicle collection rates than anticipated, as well as sales tax projections.

Halford noted that we are down in our user fees and charges, as a result of the pandemic, and several services that require in-person payment were impacted.

Halford gave a detailed overview of expenses, noting that they are underspending in the personnel side. He stated that we have over 250 vacancies and were able to charge some of our pandemic-related expenses to the special revenue fund or CARES funds. He noted for FY 2021 amended budget, we are looking at coming in under \$600 million.

Halford summarized that the board used \$45.1 million to fund the budget last fiscal year, but based on our revenue variances, our regular expense variances, and the COVID initiatives we are projected, that we will end the year with a projected \$27.8 million projected positive variance.

Commissioner Conrad questioned the supplies and services allocations.

Halford stated that services are roughly \$17 million, he noted that the number is so large because it also covers the transfer to the Schools for their operational funding.

Alex Smith, Budget, Management & Evaluation Director, noted that \$70 million is actually county and the remainder go to the schools.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the estimated of the COVID initiative variances are encumbered.

Halford shared that he can get those figures. He noted that a lot of those funds are staffing for clinics and other health functions.

Commissioner Upchurch asked about the fund balance situation and how we look now and how it will look if the recommended budget is passed.

Halford stated we will end in a better position than we were in. He noted that that we have \$634 million in recurring revenues. He reminded the board that, as we do every year, we carry forward encumbrances that we started in one fiscal year and carry over into the next year. He spoke to the difference in the fund balance for the amended budget.

Commissioner Coleman asked what the amount for the food distribution program was.

Halford stated he will have to get back to her with exact figures.

### **C. FY 2021-22 PROPOSED FUNDING FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

Halford reviewed the agencies that applied through our standard Economic Development Agency and his budget recommendations.

Commissioner Coleman stated that she was under the impression that we were only funding agencies that brought funds into the county.

Halford noted that these are the agencies that the board funded last year, so he kept the funds in his budget similar to what was passed last year.

Commissioner Foster noted that Forward High Point Foundation asked for \$40,000. She stated that they are similar to Downtown Greensboro, INC. She asked that the Board move Forward High Point to the full \$40,000 that they asked for as it is consistent as to what is being offered to Downtown Greensboro. Commissioner Foster also spoke to the Friends of John Coltrane organization and asked to include funds for the festival as they were removed last year due to the cancelation due to COVID.

Commissioner Cashion noted that the Arts Council asked for \$50,000 and noted that they did not get those funds last year. She advocated for the United Arts Council of Greensboro ask for \$45,000 for a study to help the arts organizations. She spoke to the investments of the arts.

Chairman Alston stated that he would like to bring back any proposed changes to the budget at the next work session.

Halford noted that the \$40,000 request from the Guilford County Tourism Development Authority has decided to move event to another facility and they have canceled their request.

### **III. OTHER BUSINESS**

Alston noted next meeting is June 15<sup>th</sup> if there are any outstanding questions or other departments that the Board would like to hear from to please provide that to the manager and the clerk and we will put on the next agenda.

### **IV. ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:15PM.

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Melvin "Skip" Alston  
Chairman

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Robin Keller  
Clerk to Board