

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Monday, October 5, 2020
9:00 A.M. Virtual Work Session

MINUTES

Place: Commissioners' Chambers, second floor, Durham County Government
Administrative Complex, 200 E. Main Street, Durham, NC

Present: Chair Wendy Jacobs, Vice Chair James Hill, and Commissioners Heidi Carter,
Brenda Howerton and Ellen Reckhow

Presider: Chair Wendy Jacobs

Citizen Comments

Citizens were requested to email their comments to the Clerk no later than Sunday, October 4th at 12 noon. Monica Toomer, Clerk to the Board, read three minutes' worth of each citizen comment. At the Board's request, verbatim comments are included below.

Faith Holsaert

Like many other Durham residents, we have been troubled by the report of dysfunction in the Durham County Commission, especially during this time of multiple crises. We hope the Commission can make progress in an honest reckoning and resolution of these conflicts. Allegations of racist behavior by a white female County Commissioner were made by a County employee who is a Black male. This led to a formal investigation concluding that the behavior was not motivated by racial bias but could reasonably have been perceived as biased or disrespectful in an environment lacking "trust and meaningful communications." The response by Commissioner Heidi Carter introduced the idea that her concerns had been trivialized because she is a woman.

As older white women with long histories of feminist, anti-racist, and social justice activism, we were disturbed by and wish to comment on Commissioner Carter's statement. In this instance, the Investigator's report was specific to the charge of racially discriminatory behavior. Misogyny was not the issue being examined or the subject of any formal complaint. Allegations of racism by an employee must be taken seriously and should not be an occasion for those in the role of employer to divert the discussion or personalize the issue.

We were deeply offended by the use of feminism in Commissioner Carter's statement. She states that "Women who are advocating for their priorities and principles do not need to be controlled or moderated, and the degree to which these sexist undertones continue to permeate our conversations is disturbing." Most interactions in our society have sexist undertones, and we also find that unacceptable. We cannot comment on conversations we did not witness, but we believe the complaint about sexism in response to an investigation of racism functions as a dodge against the original complaint.

When these types of conflicts develop, they offer the opportunity to uproot, lay bare, and transform many kinds of hurtful attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. For the sake of progress and healing in Durham, we hope that a process can take place to establish greater trust, respect, and accountability for the Commission's important work and as a model for a community coping with daunting challenges.

Deryll Ewell

The intent of the following comments is to draw attention to my concerns about the 5G technology and the possible harmful effects on children. Because of their small body size, they are much more vulnerable to radiation exposure. There are many studies available on this issue. The Children's Health Defense Team, headed by Attorney Robert Kennedy Jr. has published on their site, that thousands of studies, including US Government and US Military studies provide unequivocal evidence, that the radiation emitted by wireless devices are extremely harmful to children.

This radiation can have effects, such as; decreased learning ability, problems with memory and cognitive function, sleep disorder, headache, auditory effects, nosebleeds, heart palpitations and anxiety. Radiation exposure can also pose a danger to the body's DNA, reproductive system and be a risk factor in cancer, tumor growth and breaks in the blood brain barrier. There are a good number of countries around the world, also cities and towns in the United States, that have banned or are in the process of getting 5G banned. Our children are too precious, for us to be careless or too ready to allow installation of the 5G towers, to be put into our neighborhoods!

I believe, it is all of our most important responsibility to be most diligent in the protection and securing the safety and wellbeing of our county's children. I am the grandmother of 7-year-old Zyaire who is a student at, The Central Park School, in Durham. For the love of him and all the other Durham County children, I ask this board, for your consideration on this crucial issue.

Tina Motley-Pearson

As a concerned citizen and mother, I am concerned about the potential health implications caused by the roll out of 5G in Durham. There are numerous scientific studies stating the adverse effects of wireless radiation affecting brain development, learning and attention spans, behavior and mood, and fertility. Wireless radiation affects our bodies at the cellular level, even breaking down DNA. Although many individuals are affected, children are most at risk. Children's skulls are smaller and thinner, thus they absorb up to 10x more radiation than adults. Radiation from cell towers in close proximity of schools have been blamed for an increase in childhood cancers. Here is a link to one case in California: www.cbsnews.com/news/cell-tower-shut-down-some-california-parents-link-to-several-cases-of-childhood-cancer

I just used antenna search www.antennasearch.com to check out the number of towers and antennas in a 3-mile radius of my home. In the beginning of June 2020, there were 10 towers and 11 antennas. Today, there are 35 towers and 68 antennas! How many antennas and towers are being erected during the lockdown in other areas? Small cell facilities (5G) are the types of antennas going up everywhere. When I called the planning department, I was told that they are only put in public places, however take into consideration that there is a 25 foot right of way from the middle of the road, which means they can put these in front of your house.

To put this in perspective, 4G wavelengths have a range of about 10 miles. 5G wavelengths have a range of about 1,000 feet....not even 2% of 4G's range. Can you imagine HOW MANY 5G antennas will be put up? They will literally be everywhere with NO safety studies.

In the United States the state of New Hampshire has a 5G Bill HB 522 that asks, "Why have 1,000s of peer-reviewed studies, including the recently published U.S. Toxicology Program 16-year \$30 million study, that are showing a wide range of statistically significant DNA damage, brain and heart tumors, infertility, and so many other ailments, being ignored by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC)?" and "Why have more than 220 of the world's leading scientists signed an appeal to the WHO and the United Nations to protect public health from wireless radiation and nothing has been done?" Here are just a few success stories, but you can see a much more extensive list here: ehtrust.org/international-actions-to-halt-and-delay-5g

- In Italy, over 500 municipalities have passed resolutions to halt 5G and Switzerland has refused to weaken their radiofrequency radiation limits to deploy 5G.
- The Hawaii County planning board passed a resolution to halt 5G
- New Hampshire passed Bill HB 522 to create a Commission to investigate the environmental and human health impacts of 5G. Full Bill Text, Minutes, Documents. The state of Oregon has passed SB 283 “A bill relating to exposure to radiation in schools in this state; and declaring an emergency.”
- Farragut Tennessee Resolution calling on state and federal governments to halt 5G until health risks are evaluated.
- The Washington DC Advisory 3/4G Committee Resolution “Opposing Small Cell Wireless and 5G Technology Without Studies Confirming Safety”

Dr. Larry Burk and I made a short video about 5G “5 Minutes on 5G in Durham”:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=wN82NcQ_DAw

Please consider halting the roll out of 5G since there are no safety studies. This is also a civil rights issue since there is no way to protect yourself against the onslaught of radiation.

Larry Burk

How is the County addressing concerns of citizens regarding the health, economic and environmental hazards related to the rollout of 5G small cell transmitters in Durham? Please see the short 5-minute introductory video below and questions linked to relevant resources.

20-0533 Durham County Racial Equity Commission

Nana Asante-Smith, Black Agenda 919, provided the Board with a presentation from Black Agenda 919 regarding operationalizing the Racial Equity Task Force’s recommendation of institutionalizing, supporting, and funding a Racial Equity Task Force Commission that advanced racial equity work in Durham County.

Ms. Asante-Smith described Black Agenda 919 as a community coalition of people who identified as Black and were committed to creating a space for brainstorming, collaboration, and allowing their voices to be heard on issues that affected the Black community. She discussed the Durham Race Equity Task Force’s inception and scope of work.

Commissioner Howerton spoke on the Racial Equity Task Force’s work and noted this was an “all of us” conversation. She was in support of the creation of a Racial Equity Task Force Commission.

The Board expressed gratitude for the presentation and work that went into the rich, thorough report and recommendations. A joint City-County-School Board meeting was suggested to allow for discussion regarding appropriate next steps.

Kweli Rashied-Henry, Durham County Racial Equity Officer, spoke on the synergy between the work she was hired to help lead and the work the Racial Equity Task Force Commission would focus on in terms of dismantling institutionalized racism and operationalizing racial equity.

Chair Jacobs looked forward to discussing this further during the Monday, October 26th Regular Session.

Consent Agenda

The Board was requested to review the following Consent Agenda items for the September Regular Sessions.

20-0496 Extend Contract Phoenix Business Incorporated

General Manager Claudia Hager stated that the funding for this item came from the base budget for standard SAP operations. She clarified that the wording regarding authorizing the County Manager to approve subsequent renewals and amendments was for the amount that was already allocated in the budget.

20-0500 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000034 to Recognize \$765.00 in Donations to Support Bull City United

Rodney Jenkins, Public Health Director, confirmed the donation was made by a community group and was not anonymous.

Directive: Rodney Jenkins to include the name of the community group who made the donation in the agenda item so the Board could recognize them.

20-0512 Capital Project Amendment No. 20CPA000009 - Increase Snow Hill Road Pump Station and Force Main Replacement Project (DC149) budget by \$2.4M in LOBS funding; and authorize the County Manager to execute a design-build contract amendment with Wharton-Smith/Hazen and Sawyer for GMP#2

Commissioner Reckhow noted the costs for this project doubled and inquired as to whether there were any discussions with the City regarding their participation. This project would improve the City's sewage treatment system and, subsequently, allow them to earn revenue after its completion. County Manager Davis stated that staff could write a letter to make a formal request. General Manager Jay Gibson stated staff would continue seeking assistance where possible while having more discussions.

Discussion was held regarding the ballooning costs of the project and the use of LOBs.

Directive: Jay Gibson to revisit the original cost estimates to make sure that the cost elements were understood.

20-0521 Additional Funding for Contract with Law Firm of Parker Poe to \$143,000

Manager Davis and County Attorney Siler confirmed this item was within the existing budget and not an additional allocation.

20-0523 FY20-21 Service Agreement (\$200,000) with Made in Durham

Chair Jacobs highlighted the importance of the things Made in Durham was working on and believed the County and community should be kept abreast regarding Durham's economic recovery strategy.

Casey Steinbacher, Executive Director of Made in Durham (MID), provided the Board with a status update of the quarterly goals MID tracked in September. She confirmed County funds would help support Durham Technical Community College fill their classes.

Ms. Steinbacher announced that Merit America, a workforce training nonprofit for IT certification, was expanding to the Research Triangle area. She stated there were a total of 80 seats in Raleigh-Durham and less than 40 were filled.

Ms. Steinbacher believed the City was contributing \$150,000, but it had not yet been finalized. Commissioner Reckhow advocated for the City's joint participation and support in workforce development issues.

Ms. Steinbacher was encouraged to consider partnering with organizations such as Durham MBK, Project BUILD, and Bull City United.

Directive: Casey Steinbacher to provide Deborah Craig-Ray with a written announcement regarding Merit America that could be posted on the County's website.

20-0525 Budget Ordinance Amendment No.21BCC000039 to approve The North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR) Community Development Block Grant - Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) and Federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) and for the Department of Social Services to recognize funds in the amount of \$ 2,451,036.

Janeen Gordon, Assistant Director of Aging and Adult Services, provided the Board with information regarding how the grant funds would be used for eviction diversion and utility assistance services.

Chair Jacobs spoke on the importance of this issue and looked forward to discussing evictions during the Joint City-County Committee meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2020.

Ms. Gordon discussed why 15 percent of this funding was allocated for administrative costs and how the additional staff provided the County the capacity to serve at the volume necessary without overburdening existing staff.

20-0531 Capital Project Amendment No. 21CPA000010 Reducing Eight Completed Capital Projects by the Remaining Balance and Budget Amendment No. 21BCC000041 Transferring \$339,054.59 of the Remaining Funds to the Capital Financing Fund and \$195,947.90 to the Debt Service Fund

Directive: Staff to provide the Board with an update and next steps briefing on Junction Road at the November Work Session.

20-0537 Capital Project Amendment No. 20CPA000011 and Budget Amendment No. 21BCC000035 Reducing EMS Station 1 Renovation Project and Transferring Funds to the Debt Service Fund and Appropriating Capital Financing Plan Fund Fund Balance to the General Fund to Support the Temporary Lease of Space Needed During Renovation

Peri Manns, Deputy Director of Engineering and Environmental Services, informed the Board that EMS was temporarily located at the Duke Medical Office Park between Duke Street and Broad Street and across from the Stadium.

20-0539 Interlocal Agreement with City of Durham for Back on the Bull Community Health Ambassador Program and Budget Amendment 21BCC000044 Transferring \$318,244 Across Functional Areas to Fund the ILA

Commissioner Howerton expressed concerns regarding who would be responsible for the hiring of the Health Ambassadors and how diversity would be prioritized.

David Ades, Assistant Director of Budget and Management Services, addressed questions relating to County designated funding expenses as seen in the document showing the funding the County spent so far.

Directives:

- **Jodi Miller to follow-up with the City and UNC regarding their strategies and recruitment for the program and share this information with the Board via email.**
- **With regards to the document showing the funding the County spent so far and where it was coming from, staff to add another column showing which funds would, at some point, get reimbursed and through which means.**

20-0543 Capital Project Amendment No. 21CPA000012- Moving \$63,561.06 of 2016 General Obligation Bond Funds from Completed Projects to an Existing Project, and Moving \$443,413.76 of 2016 General Obligation Bond Funds from Completed Projects and Creating a New Project, and Returning \$124,605.46 of Unused Lottery Funds from a Completed Project to the State for Future Durham Public Schools Use

Keith Lane, Budget & Management Services Director, addressed questions related to why the funds were being returned to the State and clarified that the funds would remain allotted for Durham County—Durham Public Schools (DPS) would not lose the funds. The funds could not simply be transferred to another project, they had to be returned and DPS had to re-request those funds. Mr. Lane confirmed there was no danger of losing out on the funds.

20-0547 Memorandum of Agreement with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety and Durham County Youth Home

Ms. Miller stated that the proposed increase aligned with the current daily rate being provided to Guilford and Mecklenburg Counties, which they were receiving since Spring 2020. The NCDPS agreed to increase the daily per diem rate for Durham County detainees to \$153.38. The current per diem rate for Durham County residents housed at the Youth Home was \$122.00 per day. This item was to amend the agreement to reflect the change.

Ms. Miller noted retroactive funds were discussed, but it would have been very difficult due to the way the NCDPS's billing cycles functioned.

20-0550 Amendment to the Nighthawk Security Contract

Manager Davis confirmed that security would be used specifically for the election.

Directives:

- **Staff to reference that the security would be used specifically for the election in the agenda item's body.**
- **Claudia Hager to follow-up with why security was so high in Libraries which were not open (e.g. Main Library) or as large as other locations (e.g. Stanford L. Warren**

Branch Library). She would provide this information to the Board by the Monday, October 12th Regular Session.

20-0556 Capital Project Amendment No. 21CPA000014 - Creating Seven Durham Public School Capital Projects with Budgets Totaling \$10,753,002.10 using 2020 LOBs Funding

Susan Tezai, Chief Financial Officer, and Mathew Palmer, Executive Director of School Planning at Durham Public Schools, provided the Board with an update regarding the Durham School of the Arts renovations.

There were no questions regarding the items below:

20-0489 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000038 to Recognize Durham County Grant Revenue: SunTrust Foundation's 2019 Lighting the Way Award for Durham County Library's Work to Support Small Businesses and Emerging Entrepreneurs

20-0497 Requesting approval to utilize existing Operational funds in the amount of \$209,908 this 2021 fiscal year to renew contract support with Microsoft Unified Support Agreement. The support contract and services will be maintained through Durham County IS&T and Microsoft. In addition, IS&T is requesting permission to allow the County Manager to sign off on subsequent maintenance renewals and amendments

20-0505 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000033 - Appropriate \$15,164 from General Fund Fund Balance to CJRC for JCPC

20-0515 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 21BCC000028 to Recognize \$359,582 from the NC DHHS Division of Public Health Local Assistance and Training (LTAT) Branch

20-0538 Authorize the Execution of the Amendments to the 300 Block and 500 Block Affordable Housing and Market Rate Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

20-0546 Budget Ordinance Amendment 21BCC000045 to Recognize \$33,000 in Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) funds for the Durham County Sheriff's Office

20-0554 Budget Ordinance Amendment No.21BCC000046 Federal Cares Act Funding for APS/CPS Essential Worker Functions in response to COVID-19 (Accept advance funding from state)

20-0555 Capital Project Amendment No. 21CPA000013 - Reducing Northern High School Project by \$39,896,923 and Increasing Elementary C Project by \$38,411,923 and Three Existing DPS projects by \$400,000 and Creating One New Project for High School Theater Renovations with \$1,085,000

20-0557 Capital Project Amendment No. 21CPA000015 - Creating One New Durham Public School Renovation Project Totaling \$7,793,772.90 using an Issuance of Future 2021 LOBs Funding

Discussion Items

20-0526 Update on Capital Projects and Operations from Durham County ABC Board

The Board was requested to receive this report from the leadership of the Durham County ABC Board. The Durham County ABC system underwent a number of significant changes in the past year or two and wanted to update the Board on additions and changes to Durham County ABC stores and operations. The Durham County ABC produced strong, year-over-year revenue

increases over the past several years and contributed a significant amount to the Durham County budget each year.

Niegel Sullivan, General Manager of the Durham County ABC system, provided the Board updates on the ABC FY2021 capital improvement projects. He discussed how the capital improvement projects were simultaneously funded without jeopardizing operations.

Mr. Sullivan and Don Lebkes, Chair of the Durham County ABC Board, were encouraged to consider how much would be distributed to the County and City for the following fiscal year and if they were able to contribute more than was budgeted by the municipalities.

20-0518 Animal Shelter Facility Assessment and Feasibility Study Update

The Board was requested to receive an update from the project team on the conditions/assessment and feasibility study of the Animal Shelter facility. The Board previously requested staff perform an assessment and feasibility study following a tour of the facility. The team of RND Architects and Animal Arts were selected to perform this work. The final report was completed by RND/Animal Arts on September 11, 2020 and was issued to the Board.

The purpose of this update was to discuss the conditions, assessment, and recommendations in the report in preparation for future CIP discussions in the upcoming months. Therefore, the project team was not requesting any approvals from the Board pursuant to the project at this time as the recommendations in the report needed to be considered in conjunction with other upcoming CIP requests.

Heather Lewis, Animal Arts, presented the recommendations from the assessment and feasibility study.

Ms. Lewis discussed the reasons for the increasing population of kittens and how this was related to the recommended size of the shelter.

Commissioner Reckhow spoke in favor of a dual pronged approach of considering strategic short-term improvements while planning a longer-term facility. Short term solutions included researching best practices and policy changes that would increase the efficiency of the current facility (that could be adopted in the new facility).

Mr. Manns discussed the timing and funding for this project and how it was necessary to look at it in relation to all the other County capital improvement projects due to the current economic climate. Chair Jacobs believed there was some urgency to this project due to the conditions of the animal shelter and the funds spent by the County in attempts to place “band-aids” on all the chronic problems. She suggested the possibility of shifting the timing of projects.

Discussion was held regarding the County’s strategy for funding the project. Ms. Hager requested some time to return to the Board with a strategy that took into consideration the other capital improvement projects.

Mr. Manns stated there were no plans regarding the land for the new animal shelter, he clarified that this presentation was intended to gauge the Board’s appetite for the project. He confirmed

staff's intention was to look at the short-term and come up with a logical sequencing that made sense.

20-0540 Approve the Resolution to Adopt the Eno Haw Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Board was requested to review the draft 2020 Eno-Haw Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan and receive a presentation on the plan. In July 2019, Durham County began to review and revise the 2015 Eno-Haw Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan along with the State of North Carolina, Alamance County, Orange County, and Person County, as well as their incorporated municipalities. Each county maintained their autonomy, respective responsibilities, and mitigation activities in the updated regional plan. A copy of the plan could found at: www.enohawhmp.com/index.html.

The updated plan, provided at no additional cost to Durham County, provided the County the ability to work closely with regional stakeholders to develop comprehensive mitigation activities as required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requirements. Approved hazard mitigation plans were a specific eligibility requirement for any local government applying for federal mitigation grant funds to include Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Building Resilient Infrastructure Communities (BRIC), and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA).

Leslie O'Connor, Chief Emergency Manager, reviewed the history and reason for the plan update, the hazards which were assessed and included in the plan, mitigation action plans, and plans for future mitigation strategies.

Ms. O'Connor described how this plan could be incorporated into the Transit Plan and Land Use Plan.

20-0542 Budget Amendment Ordinance No. 21BCC000036 Transferring \$405,000 Across Functional Areas and Approving a Contract with the Durham Public Schools Foundation for Support of Community-Based Hope Learning Centers

The Board was requested to review and approve a contract with the Durham Public Schools Foundation for Support of Community-Based HOPE Learning Centers and approve Budget Amendment Ordinance No. 21BCC000036 transferring \$405,000 across functional areas to fund this contract.

With the rapid spread of the COVID pandemic, Durham Public Schools had to quickly pivot to deliver remote digital instruction to all 33,000 DPS students. This was an enormous undertaking. There were several critical pieces that needed be in place to ensure digital equity for all students: (1) devices and internet access, (2) tech support, (3) well-trained and supported teachers, and (4) a physical environment conducive to learning. If students were missing any one of these components, they would not be able to access learning in the fall and the consequences on their lives and the broader community would be felt for decades.

Durham Public Schools initially offered six sites for a mix of paying and free students, with only those who met the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness and those qualifying for free and reduced lunch getting free seats. In the first several weeks the DPS sites were open, enrollment only reached about 25% of capacity. Last week the Board of Education opted to reduce the

number of DPS remote learning centers to three, though, if demand grew beyond the 450 seats at these remaining sites, the other sites could be re-opened.

The HOPE Learning Centers that the Board committed to funding were a community response to ensuring that the most vulnerable K-12 students had safe, welcoming and supportive spaces to access their online learning. These learning centers responded to a need seen across the state and country to provide a supervised, supportive environment for students who did not have access to a space conducive to remote learning during the day. These centers not only provided an environment and adult support to access their online learning but also support for meeting the most vulnerable students' social-emotional and nutrition needs.

The HOPE Learning Centers were free for all qualifying students and prioritized placement for students experiencing homelessness or transitional housing, those who qualified for free or reduced lunch, those whose parents worked in essential jobs and were unable to have childcare at home during the day (food industry, custodial staff, healthcare), those with parents who had become unemployed due to COVID, those who were part of the foster care system, and those who lived in Durham Housing Authority housing.

The Durham Public Schools Foundation was acting as the fiscal agent and organizing agency for HOPE Learning Center classrooms located at the YMCA, Student U, and Kate's Korner. Maximum current capacity was 338 students and enrollment after three weeks was a little over 50% of that number. Additional capacity was available if enrollment demand exceeded capacity. Durham County would reimburse the DPS Foundation for a small amount of administrative cost and then, through the foundation, reimburse each of the host sites at a rate of \$200 per student per week. The County would only pay for students served.

The funding source for this contract and the \$405,000 were the funds set aside as part of the FY 2020-21 Budget Process to be used for COVID-19 related expenses. They were moved from the General Government functional area to the Education functional area to most accurately capture education related expenses.

Alexandra Zagbayou, Executive Director at Student U, discussed her meeting with DPS regarding DPS closing some of their HOPE Learning Centers and how Student U could absorb the employees and students.

Magan Gonzales-Smith, Durham Public Schools Foundation Executive Director, discussed the difference in projected need versus the actual need and the possible factors that contributed to lower participation.

Ms. Zagbayou and Ms. Gonzales-Smith described their efforts to increase enrollment in the HOPE Learning Centers.

Ms. Zagbayou stated she would provide the Board with demographic data of students by Friday, October 16th. Commissioner Reckhow emphasized the importance of reaching students from marginalized communities such as the approximately 2,000 DPS students who lived in public housing. Studies showed that students from marginalized communities had more difficulties with virtual learning in terms of access and support.

Ms. Zagbayou discussed the average daily attendance patterns of students as seen at the Student U. Ms. Gonzales-Smith confirmed attendance was being tracked and would be included in the reporting provided to the Board. Drew Cummings, Chief of Staff, confirmed the demographic data of students that was to be provided to the Board by Friday, October 16th would be disaggregated data.

20-0470 Approval of Contract with Reinvestment Partners in the amount of \$450,600 to Provide Non-Congregate Sheltering for Homeless Residents

The Board was requested to approve the attached contract for 64 hotel rooms in Buildings A and B of the Carolina Duke Inn from Reinvestment Partners affiliate RP Rx Housing, LLC to shelter medically fragile homeless residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CDC provided guidance on the need to provide non-congregate sheltering for this population which was supported by FEMA and NCHHS. This proposed contract aligned with the CDC's guidance.

County staff worked with Reinvestment Partners on the concept of contracting with them for some number of rooms that they, in turn, leased for one to two years from the owner of the Carolina Duke Inn. Contract negotiations were pursuant to Reinvestment Partners' response to the June RFP issued by the County and ultimately included the MOU between Reinvestment Partners for both Buildings A and B at the Carolina Duke Inn as well an MOU covering services provided by Reinvestment Partners, Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD), and Project Access of Durham County. The proposed agreement was for 24 rooms in Building B and up to 40 rooms in Building A that the County would continue to lease and occupy. This brought the total capacity at that site to 64, which also brought the homeless housing system closer to housing the same number of homeless individuals as it did pre-COVID. The proposed agreement was through December 31st with options to extend in one month increments as well as a 30-day termination clause.

A combination of new funding sources made it possible for Durham County to enter into this agreement in a way that should require less County funding. UMD received \$329,000 earlier in the summer in ESG-CV funding which defrayed the associated costs of food and security and case management at the site. Additionally, staff worked with NCEM to receive expedited reimbursements for all eligible costs for non-congregate sheltering operations and associated wrap-around services. This new program was launched in early August by NCEM and NCHHS. The associated MOU with the State to cover these reimbursements was forthcoming at a future Board meeting. Currently, the FEMA NCS waiver for the State ended at the end of October 2020. The expectation of NCEM (as of 8/14/2020) was that FEMA would grant an additional waiver extension through the end of the calendar year. If and when the State's waiver for non-congregate housing expired, the County would have to decide which, if any, of the contracted rooms it would want to continue to contract using County general funds.

An MOU was developed with UMD, Project Access of Durham County, and Reinvestment Partners and governed all aspects of intake and coordinated service provision to the individuals that were to occupy the rooms. Alliance Health leased the remaining eight rooms in Building B and could be an additional, helpful service partner.

Finally, if and when COVID started to recede and the need for non-congregate housing started to decrease, the County could reduce the number of rooms leased in Building A while maintaining the core of rooms in Building B.

Peter Skillern, Executive Director of Reinvestment Partners, thanked the City and County staff for maintaining this complex service delivery model in order to serve the community.

Mr. Cummings explained the funding amounts and how they were related to the amounts from July 13th.

Mr. Cummings confirmed that the entry and assignment of a room was fully integrated with the Coordinated Entry System.

Commissioner Reckhow moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter, to suspend the rules.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Howerton moved, seconded by Commissioner Reckhow, to approve the contract.

The motion carried unanimously.

Directive: Staff to add a note/description to the agenda item stating that the funding for this contract was already allocated and was eligible for FEMA reimbursement according to the State.

20-0552 Review of Commissioner Directives

The Board was requested to review staff follow-up on Commissioner directives.

Board directives from previous meetings as well as staff follow-up were reviewed at monthly Work Sessions. Staff attempted to have all directives submitted into the system as accurately as possible as soon after they are issued as possible and to follow-up with the Board and/or with other relevant parties in an appropriate time frame.

Commissioner Howerton described the process the Juneteenth discussion was undergoing at the legislative level.

Ms. Hager updated the Board on the document staff would soon distribute which included a breakdown of details of County expenses, what was eligible for FEMA reimbursement, and so on.

Discussion was held regarding the continuation of hazard pay.

Directives: Staff to provide the Board with a clear description of the Hazard Pay policy and benchmarking of other counties' policies.

Closed Session

20-0560 Closed Session

The Board was requested to adjourn to Closed Session to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee, pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6).

Commissioner Reckhow moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter, to go into Closed Session.

The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Hill moved, seconded by Commissioner Reckhow, to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tania De Los Santos
Administrative Assistant