

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

Monday, December 7, 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 Brenda Howerton, Vice Chair Wendy Jacobs, and Commissioners Nida
Allam, Nimasheena Burns, and Heidi Carter

Presiders: County Attorney Lowell Siler and Chair Brenda Howerton

Ceremonial Items

20-0659 Board of Elections Acknowledgment of Certificates

Philip Lehman, Chairman of the Durham County Board of Elections, spoke a few words on the election and the concerns shared by voters and elections staff. He stated there was almost no change in the recounts conducted thus far.

Mr. Lehman noted the historic voter turnout and stated there were 180,610 ballots cast—nearly 74% of registered voters in Durham County voted in the 2020 election. He expressed his appreciation for the many people who worked on the election.

County Attorney Lowell Siler thanked Mr. Lehman for his work in the election as well as in the recount efforts.

20-0656 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of County Commissioners

Attorney Siler opened the floor for nominations for the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Burns nominated Brenda Howerton for the position of Chair.

The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Howerton stated she was humbled and honored to be elected as the Chair in the State's first all-female Board of County Commissioners. She recognized that Asheville also had an all-female board, but they had not yet been sworn in. Chair Howerton spoke on the importance of ethics, accountability, and transparency. She discussed the priorities and opportunities the Board had to serve the Durham community.

Chair Howerton nominated Commissioner Burns for the position of Vice Chair.

The vote carried as follows:

Ayes: Burns, Howerton

Noes: Allam, Carter, Jacobs

Commissioner Allam nominated Wendy Jacobs for the position of Vice Chair.

The vote carried as follows:

Ayes: Allam, Carter, Jacobs

Noes: Burns, Howerton

Vice Chair Jacobs thanked the Board for allowing her the honor and privilege of serving as the Vice Chair. She spoke of the values in which her leadership as a County Commissioner was rooted in, they included fighting corruption and greed, racism and white supremacy, child poverty as well as her passion for public education. Vice Chair Jacobs looked forward to working together in order to best address the needs of the Durham community and make best use of the resources and public dollars in Durham County.

Chair Howerton announced there were two items the Board needed to address as soon as possible in order create a cohesive and productive atmosphere: training around Commissioner - County Manager relationship and the Racial Equity Institute training.

Directive: County Manager and County Attorney to line the following items up for the Board to discuss during the Monday, January 4th Work Session:

- 1. Training around Commissioner-County Manager relationship and**
- 2. Racial Equity Institute training**

Items to be Approved

20-0652 Approval of Public Official Bonds

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Carter moved, seconded by Vice Chair Jacobs, to approve the public official bonds.

The motion carried unanimously.

20-0657 Approval of 2021 Board of County Commissioners' Meeting Schedule

Vice Chair Jacobs noted that the September Work Session was pushed to Tuesday, September 7th due to Labor Day, but that Tuesday was Rosh Hashanah. She requested that a poll be conducted by the Board to look at alternative dates.

Commissioner Allam moved, seconded by Commissioner Burns, to approve the schedule as amended by Vice Chair Jacobs.

The motion carried unanimously.

Directive: Monica Toomer to reschedule the Tuesday, September 7th Work Session due to Rosh Hashanah.

The Board thanked Monica Toomer, Clerk to the Board, for an efficient swearing-in of the County Commissioners. They thanked her for things being conducted in a safe manner as well as for her efforts to keep everything running smoothly while transitioning to “virtual mode” during the pandemic. Ms. Toomer stated her appreciation for the acknowledgement and noted the Public Information Office, County Manager, and County Attorney participation in the swearing-in ceremony.

Adjournment

Commissioner Burns moved, seconded by Vice Chair Jacobs, to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Tania De Los Santos
Administrative Assistant