

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

Monday, January 3, 2022

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: Chair Brenda Howerton

**Citizen Comments**

Monica Wallace, Clerk to the Board, read the two following Citizen Comments submitted via email:

**Jim Svara**

"Dear Members of the Durham Board of County Commissioners,

I would like to ask you to encourage the Department of Social Services Board of Directors to extend the deadline for the Low-Income Homeowners Relief Program to January 31.

DSS Director Ben Rose informed me that there were only 186 applications as of December 23. 51 had been approved, 47 denied, and 88 were pending. There was limited staff assistance available in the final weeks of December, and there were three county holidays between December 23 and the December 31 deadline. We are afraid that many qualifying homeowners who need the assistance will be left out.

It is difficult to inform the public of a new program. Although information about the program was sent to all homeowners with their property tax bill, the final name of the program was not included in that insert, and the eligibility level was set at 30% AMI, although those with income up to 60% of the Area Median Income could be placed on a waiting list in case the program were expanded. Later the eligible income was raised to 60% AMI and those with income up to 80% AMI could be placed on a waiting list. Community organizations promoting the program were delayed in developing their own promotional material until the program details were finalized.

We urge you to extend the deadline for applications through the end of January. In the outreach we are doing to promote the program, we have recommended that homeowners pay their full tax bill by the January 5 tax deadline if they are applying close to the deadline for the LIHR grant. The same would apply to persons who apply for the grant after December 31 if the deadline is extended. The Tax Administration Office will pay the grant if approved to the homeowner when the full tax bill has already been paid.

I understand that the DSS Board is holding a special meeting today—January 3. Please indicate to the Board your support for the extension that will increase the number of low-income homeowners that can benefit from this innovative program.”

DeWarren Langley

“The Youth Home was a substantial investment of \$30 million dollars to keep our youth who require confinement in their community where we can ensure access to high quality services and provide greater access to their family. The equation is unbalanced if we do not have a collective impact strategy and plan with equal or greater financial commitment to ensure our youth have the support, resources and opportunities to grow and develop to prepare them to lead meaningful and successful lives.

According to data from Durham Police Department, over 95% of the city’s gun violence victims and perpetrators are black boys and young men. According to academic achievement and discipline data from Durham Public Schools, boys of color, specifically black boys, have the lowest percentage that met minimum grade level proficiency and college and career readiness while also having the highest short- and long-term suspensions since 2015. The most juvenile petitions and confinements at the Youth Home have consistently been boys of color (BOC).

We are not doing enough to educate, equip and empower boys and young men of color (BYMOC) in Durham! The data shows we are failing them, and they deserve better!

In December, I attended MBK University 101: Developing and Launching Your Local MBK Action Plan of My Brother's Keeper Alliance which provided insights and strategies to develop, complete and launch a Local Action Plan to serve as a living, breathing document that guides work, is reported out on and is assessed and evolved as necessary. In addition, representatives from an MBK community shared about their journey launching their plan and honors the ongoing work. I was the only representative from Durham present.

While I understand the administration is engaging in an operational assessment of MBK Durham to conduct an analysis that evaluates operations and processes to identify opportunities for improvement, stakeholder engagement is essential if we are to ensure MBK Durham has the leadership, governance structure and community support to build and sustain an ecosystem that provides responsive services that ensure boys of color enter school ready to learn, reading at level, graduating from high school ready for college and career, completing postsecondary education or training and successfully entering the workforce.

I am reaching out to again advocate for the creation of a My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) Durham Advisory Board to provide the leadership and accountability required for a robust collective impact strategy that can transform the quality of life of boys and young men of color. In addition, I ask commissioners to direct staff to create a revised Boys & Young Men of Color (BYMOC) Local Action Plan for Durham County by a cross section of stakeholders to improve coordination, strengthen collaboration & shared responsibility, and systemic reforms with clear goals, measurable outcomes and timeframe to inform the collective impact strategy in partnership with the City of Durham.

We want BYMOC to thrive not just survive.

The Charles Hamilton Houston Foundation, Inc. will continue to work tirelessly to ensure boys and young men of color in our Young Men of Excellence Program and Career Pathway Program gain the skills, experiences, and support that will empower them to reach their

potential through education and training to achieve career success and economic stability and mobility.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the administration.”

Vice-Chair Jacobs confirmed there would be a DSS Board special meeting at 4 p.m. in which the contents of Mr. Svarra’s comment would be shared and discussed.

Interim County Manager Claudia Hager spoke on Mr. Langley’s comments and provided the Board with an update on the staff’s work with My Brother’s Keeper Durham and the goal of a collective impact approach.

### **Consent Agenda**

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

#### **22-0005 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 22BCC00056 Public Health to Recognize \$514,327 from the NC DHHS Division of Public Health Women’s and Children’s Health Section/Immunization Branch for Covid-19 Mass Vaccination Planning and Implementation**

**Directive: Staff to regularly provide the Board with detailed and specific information as to how these funds would be used and what the County was doing to increase vaccination rates.**

#### **22-0007 Budget Ordinance Amendment No.22BCC00056 to Recognize \$83,960.25 for Year One of a Three-Year US Department of Justice Grant to the Criminal Justice Resource Center for the Mental Health Court Expansion Initiative**

The Criminal Justice Resource Center (CJRC) and Public Information Office staff was commended for their work on the grant and for publishing information on the award, respectively.

Vice-Chair Jacobs inquired as to whether the County had an adequate number of providers in the community for what the CJRC was attempting to accomplish. Gudrun Parmer, CJRC Director, stated that was to be determined. She described which activities were required for each year of the grant and noted this was an attempt to focus on justice and mental health collaboration—specifically strengthening the collaboration between the CJRC, court system, and District Attorney’s Office.

#### **22-0009 Conservation Easement Option with Clara Glenn for 12721 Hampton Road**

Commissioner Carter thanked Jane Korest, Division Open Space & Real Estate Division Manager, and Celeste Burns, Open Space & Real Estate Coordinator, for all their work in conservation easements which were a cost-effective way to permanently protect farmland—it allowed the property to remain in private ownership and the County to hold the development rights.

Vice-Chair Jacobs noted this was a Historic Black Owned Farm.

Commissioner Burns hoped this story would be submitted to the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) where it could reach many other families who would benefit from learning about conservation easements. Vice-Chair Jacobs agreed this would be a great way to broadcast the work being done which included helping families preserve wealth, protecting the water, sustaining the local food economy, and getting younger generations interested in farming.

**22-0013 Request from Durham County ABC Board for Flexibility with General Manager Salary**

The Board expressed some concerns and inquired as to whether it was possible to include some type of parameters on the salary, such as approving flexibility within the competitive market rates. Interim Manager Hager discussed the staff's intention to return to the Board with more information and possibly a plan to incorporate the position and salary into the County's pay bands. She clarified that this item was only to give the ABC Board the authority to recruit in the range that aligned with the market because it appeared the Clerk of Court salary (which was set as the benchmark in the General Statute) did not align with ABC Manager salaries across the state.

**22-0016 Capital Project Amendment No.22CPA00015 Appropriating \$12,000,000 of Limited Obligation Bond (LOBs) Funding from a Future Financing Source to increase the Existing Snow Hill Road Pump Station and Force Main Replacement Project (47302635DC149); as well as Execution of the Design-Builder "Guaranteed Maximum Price #4" Contract**

Peri Manns, Deputy Director of Engineering and Environmental Services, confirmed this was a city-owned pump station. He noted the County somewhat agreed to take on this project to increase the capacity for some critical manufacturing and industrial facilities in the Treyburn area. He confirmed all revenue (from fees collected from companies who used it) went to the City.

Interim Manager Hager mentioned her preliminary conversations with the City Manager and stated staff would return to the Board with more information. The goal was some shared commitment in how the project was funded.

**Directives:**

- **Staff to return to the Board with more information regarding failing septic systems in the County.**
- **Staff to provide the Board with information regarding the revenue the City received from the use of the Snow Hill Road Pump Station.**
- **Staff to provide the Board with information regarding the goal of establishing a shared commitment in how the project was funded.**

**22-0022 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 22BCC00057 Appropriating \$400,000 of General Fund Fund Balance to Provide Stopgap Funding for COVID-19 Related Emergency Food Assistance in Durham County**

Interim Manager Hager discussed the RFP process that would allow interested entities to apply for funding.

Donna Rewalt, Cooperative Extension Director, and Mary Oxendine, County Food Security Coordinator noted the most effective method was to work with a local organization that could disburse the grants faster than the County could. Staff would provide more detailed information regarding the organization on Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup>.

Staff discussed the monthly food pantry coordination meeting that all Durham food pantry operators were made aware of. Ms. Rewalt confirmed there would be a press release and other marketing as soon as the funding was approved.

Vice Chair Jacobs inquired whether this funding would meet the needs of the community as described by the Iglesia Emanuel food pantry. Ms. Oxendine noted the Iglesia Emanuel was probably the second largest emergency food provider in the County; they spent over \$5,000 a week on rice and beans alone. She stated this did support the work they were doing and helped fill a gap in resources for them.

Commissioner Burns spoke in favor of the required webinar and training that would be provided to the organizations chosen for funding. It bridged a gap and helped the organizations be successful as well as ensured residents were connected to other resources.

There were no questions regarding the items below:

**21-0700 Approval to Enter into a Contract with Insight Global Staffing Agency for an IS&T Help Desk Contractor Using Current Fiscal Year Operational Budget Funds of \$72,800**

**21-0741 Extension of the 2022 Listing Period for Business Personal Property**

**22-0001 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 22BCC00055 to Recognize \$259,469 of NC Department of Transportation (NDCOT) Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) funds for Transportation**

**22-0004 Detention Center Cooler Freezer Restoration (temporary refrigeration)**

**22-0006 Approval of Contract with Accentuate Staffing, Inc for a ServiceNow Technical Support Contractor for \$243,750.00 to be funded by FY2021-2022 IS&T Operational Budget**

**22-0008 Bull City Financial Services (BCFS) Contract Amendment**

**22-0010 Emergency & Scheduled Repairs for TWWTP Contract Amendment with Carolina Civilworks, Inc.**

**22-0015 Amendment to Lease Agreement Between Durham County and Presidential Park West Property Owner, LLC**

## **Discussion Items**

**22-0024 Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 22BCC00058 Appropriating \$137,186 of General Fund Fund Balance and to authorize the Contract for the Student Learning Center located at DTCC**

The Board was requested to approve Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 22BCC00058 Appropriating \$137,186 of General Fund fund Balance and to approve the contract between

Durham County Government and Kate's Korner to provide tutoring and enrichment services to support Durham Housing Authority (DHA) communities, low-income students attending Durham Technical Community College (DTCC), and Families Moving Forward residents. This partnership was a continuation of learning centers offered in the spring and summer of 2021 held at DTCC. In 2021, Kate's Korner successfully provided distance learning, summer camps, and after-school programs throughout COVID-19 to over 270 children and 150 families. The previous enrichment programs provided academic support to families who would not otherwise have the resources for additional childcare and/or tutoring enhancements. The learning center and summer camps provided a safe and clean environment where children's social-emotional, physical, dietary, and academic needs were met. Tutorial services had an emphasis on math, reading, and science. Enrichment programs included educational field trips, behavioral health support services, and parenting support services.

The current proposal sought funding to continue learning support services from January 11, 2022, through June 30, 2022. Program costs, including in-kind donations, totaled \$210,436. Durham County Government was requested to support \$137,186 of the expense. Fund balance reserves would be used to cover the expense, with additional funding being sought from United Way. In-kind contributions from Families Moving Forward, HEARTS and Step-Up Durham would support participant transportation needs. DTCC would provide the space and other support needed to accommodate the program. Kate's Korner would provide in-kind contributions through waived registration and material fees as well as meals.

The learning center was expected to serve 60 youth through tutorial services, enrichment programs, behavioral health support services, and parent support services. Program services would include social-emotional support, conflict resolution, and team building. The Parent advocacy partnership would be facilitated by Village of Wisdom. The program would also benefit DTCC students who met the program criteria. This important outcome would benefit Durham County DTCC students by removing a childcare barrier which often impeded academic progression.

The Board voiced their support of work and partnerships created to help children in Durham.

Kezia Goodwin, Owner of Kate's Korner, thanked the Board and JB Buxton, President of DTCC, for their partnership and for putting children first. She explained why the Board was being asked to suspend the rules and approve this item at this meeting.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Allam, to approve Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 22BCC00058 appropriating \$137,186 of General Fund fund Balance and to authorize a contract between Durham County Government and Kate's Korner for the learning enrichment center located at Durham Technical Community College.

The motion carried unanimously.

## **22-0014 GoDurham ACCESS**

Ellen Beckmann, Transportation Manager, provided the Board with an informational presentation on GoDurham ACCESS.

The presentation provided an overview of GoDurham ACCESS demand response transit service including a review of who used the service, how it worked for riders, a history of the service, the merger of City and County services, rider feedback, review of current initiatives, and opportunities for improvement.

Starting in 1998, Durham County ACCESS and the City of Durham's GoDurham ACCESS Demand Response Program operated pursuant to an interlocal agreement that provided transportation service through a coordinated service model. In 2018, the County began formal discussions with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Public Transportation Division and the City of Durham to determine the feasibility of the City completely taking over the County's Demand Response Transportation Service. In 2019, the Board of Commissioners and the City Council approved the merger between the City and County Demand Response Services and in December 2020, extended the merger through December 31, 2020. In May 2021, the financial and administrative terms were restructured, and this agreement was extended through June 30, 2026.

In addition, during the development of the Durham Transit Plan in 2020-2021, the first and second rounds of public engagement revealed that improvement to ACCESS services was a high priority among residents.

Ms. Beckmann discussed the restored NCDOT Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) funds and explained they were offered for many years but were cut in fiscal year 2021 during the pandemic due to transit agencies receiving federal funding through the CARES Act.

Vice-Chair Jacobs shared her concerns regarding the discontinuance of the Transportation Advisory Committee. She believed the County needed to provide the public with more information regarding the existing transit resources and options. She suggested having a website or even a phone number residents could call and ask about transportation, such as: "I need to get to a job in Treyburn, how do I get there?" Vice-Chair Jacobs reiterated the importance of helping Durham residents access jobs in Treyburn and other areas the County made investments into.

Regarding the study recommended in the Durham Transit Plan, Ms. Beckmann stated the thought was for it to be funded through the Transit Plan and a joint effort between the City, County, and GoTriangle—however, it was currently under discussion with the transit plan development.

Ms. Beckmann discussed the 10 percent local cost share requirements for the rural general public funding (part of the ROAP program). She confirmed the funding the County provided for trips kept pace with the overall demand.

Ms. Beckmann confirmed the City was aggressively recruiting to hire more public transit drivers.

Commissioner Carter believed it was important for companies to participate in the job access

transit program opportunities (e.g., van pool). She suggested the Board consider adding this to the list of things companies could provide in return for incentives.

Chair Howerton confirmed that Merck and Corning expressed their desire to work with the City and County on transportation issues multiple times. She believed it was a matter of getting on the same page.

**Directives:**

- **Ellen Beckmann to follow up with Merck regarding their interest in the van pool.**
- **Ellen Beckmann to provide the Board with more information and a breakdown of the costs.**
- **Ellen Beckmann to follow up with the City to determine how to get a City-County Transportation Advisory Committee going.**
- **Ellen Beckmann to provide the Board with more information regarding the action companies, such as Merck and Corning, were doing to help Durham residents access job sites.**
- **Ellen Beckmann to work on providing regular updates to the Board.**
- **Ellen Beckmann to provide the Board with information regarding the consequences of a resident scheduling a trip and failing to show up for it.**

**21-0710 Durham Pre-K Quarterly Update**

Durham PreK (DPK) began in earnest and under the leadership of Child Care Services Association (CCSA) in the fall of 2018—Durham’s goal was a high-quality universal pre-K for all 3 and 4-year-olds. The other key partners were Durham’s Partnership for Children, Durham Public Schools (DPS), and Families and Communities Rising (Head Start). The program was now in its fourth year and used a braided funding model to maximize the impact of public dollars via a mixed delivery system where children were served at programs at public schools, Head Start, and private childcare sites. Total Durham County funding was just under \$6 million per year and this included the \$1.5 million that went to DPS for the eight Durham Pre-K classrooms at the former Whitted School.

Part of CCSA’s reporting responsibilities included providing quarterly reports on progress and issues to the Board. Though Durham PreK was often a topic at joint board meetings with the Board of Education, those conversations focused on the progress and issues of pre-K specifically in DPS schools. This report was intended to provide a broader update on progress and barriers toward universality and raise system-wide issues and needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected early childhood development and, as with COVID recovery in the public schools, it needed attention and support. More investments were needed to shore up the early childhood education system that was so beneficial for children and working parents. The County’s childcare infrastructure was underfunded before the pandemic and there was now a national childcare crisis. By investing in expanding and increasing access to Durham PreK through ARPA funding or through the normal budget process, working toward the community’s bold vision for universal access to high quality pre-K, change would be affected in three ways:

- Providing critical learning opportunities for children who experienced significant disruption in their learning, play, and relationships with peers over the past two years.



- Providing stability and support for those working in childcare, many of whom were Black women small business owners.
- Ensuring more working families had access to the quality and reliable care they needed to be able to work, thus ensuring the economy stayed healthy.

Linda Chappel, CCSA Senior VP, presented information on the following topics: Durham PreK growth, Governance Committee recommendations and funding request, Durham PreK budget forecast, and professional development.

The DPK Governance Committee submitted an ARPA funding request of \$1,140,000 for 2022 - 2023. The request covered the following costs:

Add seats to increase access for 4-year-olds	\$720,000 in SY23 for 54 – 100 additional seats
Fund components of the Durham PreK Equity Plan	\$220,000 in SY23 (\$160,000 for wrap care; \$60,000 for transportation study)
Fund an RFP process to create a Program Evaluation Design for DPK	Up to \$200,000 in SY23

Vice-Chair Jacobs voiced her support of this work and inquired about ARPA funds. Interim Manager Hager addressed her questions and clarified that the funds had to be encumbered by 2024 and spent by 2026.

In terms of data related to DPS kindergarten screening and whether there was any measured impact made by having more children in higher quality Pre-K, Ms. Chappel discussed the difficulty of data sharing across systems. She noted this was a weakness and staff continued to prioritize it.

Commissioner Burns noted funding needed to continue to be present for the years after the ARPA funds ceased to exist (whether through increased taxes or some other funding source) and spoke on the importance of lobbying for federal and state funding for education.

Commissioner Carter emphasized the need to think long term and find ways to continue to fund this effort while being fiscally restrained.

Chair Howerton noted the importance of acquiring the benchmark data (and the data from the years after the DPK began) to determine whether the heavy investments the County was making were moving the needle.

Marsha Basloe, CCSA President, Ms. Chappel, and Cate Elander, Durham County Early Childhood Coordinator, discussed the activities happening around the “birth to three years” population, problems with childcare subsidies, and the importance of investing in children from the start rather than waiting until they were old enough for school.

**Directive: In the press release announcing the new DPK application intake, staff to include an overview of the progress made and what the goals of the program were.**

**22-0026 Resolution - Honoring Mr. Linward Hedgspeth**

Vice-Chair Jacobs clarified why staff was asking for approval of this item today.

Commissioner Burns moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Jacobs, to suspend the rules.

The motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Burns, to approve the resolution honoring Mr. Hedgspeth.

The motion carried unanimously.

**21-0709 Review of Commissioner Directives**

The Board was requested to review staff follow-up regarding previously issued directives.

There were no comments or questions.

**22-0020 Commissioner Comments**

The Board was requested to allow each Commissioner six minutes to report on conferences or make comments regarding issues that could be of interest or concern to the Board.

Commissioner Allam announced the 2021 County Health Rankings were recently published and Durham County was named one of the healthiest counties in North Carolina. Durham was ranked in seventh place among all 100 counties. She wanted to celebrate the Public Health Department Director and staff for all their work.

Commissioner Burns announced a new community college grant—the Longleaf Commitment grant—and provided details regarding eligibility and award amounts. She encouraged the Board to get the word out and ensure the community knew about this resource.

**Closed Session**

**22-0018 Closed Session**

The Board was requested to adjourn into Closed Session to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege was hereby acknowledged; pursuant to G. S. 143-318.11(a)(3).

Vice-Chair Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Allam, to adjourn to Closed Session.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Reconvene from Closed Session**

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Burns, for the Durham County Board of County Commissioners, pursuant to the terms of a Letter of Engagement, to hire Attorney Sonny Haynes, of the Law Firm of Womble, Bond and Dickinson to represent and defend the County and/or Board in potential litigation that may be filed on behalf of Wendell Davis, former Durham County Manager.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Allam moved, seconded by Commissioner Burns, to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tania De Los Santos", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Tania De Los Santos  
Administrative Assistant