

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

Monday, December 4, 2023

9:00 A.M. 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, Commissioner Nimasheena Burns and Heidi Carter

Presider: Chair Brenda Howerton

Zoom Hybrid

Participants: 8

Other Business

23-0887 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of County Commissioners

Al Andrews County Attorney, opened the meeting and explained the process of electing a Chair and Vice-Chair. He opened the floor for nominations for the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Carter nominated Commissioner Nida Allam for the position of Chair.

The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Allam asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. Vice-Chair Jacobs nominated Commissioner Nimasheena Burns for the position of Vice-Chair.

The motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chair Burns expressed gratitude to family and friends for their support. She spoke of the need for Durham residents to be protected, elevated, and put first. Vice-Chair Burns continued to say meeting with all elected officials was important regardless of race and gender and they would continue to work and support small business to create jobs. She looked forward to working with the School Board and hoped to carve out a path to not leave citizens behind.

Chair Allam also shared a brief statement:

"Good morning, Durham County.

First and foremost, a few thank yous:

Thank you, Chair Howerton and Vice Chair Jacobs for your mentorship and support. You've set a high bar for what it looks like to lead this Board—and I'm thrilled to work with Vice Chair Burns to build on your example.

I'd also like to thank the County staff—County Attorney Andrews, our County Manager Dr. Sowell, our Board Clerk Monica Wallace, and every single person who works to make this Chamber function smoothly...

The five of us may be up here making votes, but the County only thrives because of our incredible team. It's not always glamorous work, it's not always in the spotlight—but it is vital to the strength of our community. Thank you to every staff member from our classified staff to front-line staff up to management, thank you.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank my family, my Mama & Papa, my siblings & niece Afreen, Arsheen, Mohamed, Zain & Rania, and of course Towqir and my sweet baby girl Aaliyah. All your support and unconditional love has given me the strength to serve.

And finally, I'd like to thank the people of Durham County for putting their trust in us. As Chair, it will be my honor to reflect the values of this County, to make life easier for everyday individuals and families. After all, this is not my Board nor our Board, it's the People's Board and that's what our call to service is all about.

My journey to public service started nearly a decade ago. I was just an undergraduate student down the road at North Carolina State University when my best friends were killed in a brutal hate crime. Deah, Yusor, and Razan were funny. They were smart. They were driven. They had big dreams and bright futures, and they never got a chance to fulfill them. They were stolen from us too early, right on the brink of the rest of their lives.

From that day on, I made a commitment to carry on their legacy. To serve with their humility, kindness, and generosity of spirit. To make the world safe for every person who has ever been threatened because of who they are, what they believe, where they live, or who they love.

Today feels like a milestone in that journey, because even amid a record rise in bigotry and hate... This Board looked at this Muslim woman who grew up in a post 9/11 America being called a terrorist, told to go back to where I came from, and y'all chose to call me Chair.

I think back to my parents, coming to the United States to make a better life for my sisters and me. Growing up, they stretched every dollar to move us closer to the best schools. They gave back to their family overseas and served their neighbors in their own backyard at food pantries and in Mosque. My parents taught me that I'm not living for this life but that each of us was placed on Earth to achieve our true purpose, to bring light to those around us and smooth the path for the next generation.

And I can't even find words to describe how grateful I am, for everything they sacrificed to make it easier for me to reach my purpose. My parents were naturalized citizens, but they still live on the margins, because of how we dress, how we look, and

how we pray, they've always been aware of the target on our backs; But Mama and Papa, today, that target was a badge of honor. We aren't just part of this community, we can help lead it, and for the next year, that's exactly what this Board should do.

We'll continue the work we've already started—in the tradition of decades of amazing public servants here in Durham County and across the state—with respect for the people and for one another.

We'll further our commitment to Guaranteed Basic Income, tax relief and assistance, and elevating the voices of working-class people. And together, we'll join hands in pursuit of our shared purpose: the dignity and integrity of every person in Durham County.

Thank you!"

Commissioner Howerton congratulated both the Chair and Vice-Chair on their new leadership. She stated she was honored to serve as the Chair of Board of County Commissioners for the past three (3) years and emphasized work with staff and partners within the community was not complete and that she looked forward to continuing to serve the community.

Commissioner Jacobs shared a brief statement:

"I would like to congratulate the new leadership of our board. I look forward to supporting both of you in your new roles. It is important for us as an all-female board to model elevating younger women in leadership and I welcome this opportunity.

I also would like to thank Commissioner Howerton for your leadership over the past three years of our historic all female board. It has been a pleasure to work with you as Vice Chair. I have really enjoyed our partnership and teamwork together.

I believe in the power of local government to make positive and progressive change so that people in our community can thrive and live well. This power is due to the collective force of our community, our government staff and our board working together to make this change. I look forward to our board, community and staff working together collectively and collaboratively in the year ahead!"

Commissioner Carter congratulated both the Chair and Vice-Chair on their new leadership and looked forward to the new year with the Board, leadership, and staff. She continued to say after 20 years as an elected official, she would no longer seek reelection, however she was not retiring from the work and would continue to fight for public schools and what the Board believed in.

Citizen Comments

The Board of County Commissioners provided a 30-minute comment period to allow Durham County citizens an opportunity to speak. Citizens were given the option to deliver their Citizen Comments in-person or virtually via email to the Clerk no later than Sunday, October 1st at 12 noon.

DeWarren K Langley, spoke on workforce readiness within the youth population and asked the Board for support of the Charles Hamilton Houston Foundation.

Consent Agenda

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

23-0832 Approval of an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City of Durham for a Joint Crisis Communications Plan with Durham County's share not to exceed \$50,000

Elizabeth Schroeder, Chief of Emergency Management, stated Emergency Management would lead the RFP process and would work closely with all parties involved; however, this was a complicated process due to the number of stakeholders involved. She added best practices and techniques would be utilized to keep the community informed.

23-0853 Public Health Requests Approval for Fee Schedule Changes and a Change in the Chagemaster Rate

Joanne Pierce, Assistant County Manager, clarified public health looked at the fee schedule every year and adjusted as required. She continued to say the percentages varied and there was a sliding fee scale for qualified citizens; however, overall, the percentage was three (3) percent.

23-0882 Capital Project Amendment No.24CPA00013 Appropriating \$600K of Limited Obligation Bond Funding (LOBS) for the New Emergency Operations Center (EOC) & Backup 911/Sheriff's Call Center Capital Project (4730DC158), and Execution of Contract for Architectural Design Advanced Planning Services with O'Brien Atkins Associates for the EOC & Backup 911/Sheriff's Call Center Project

County Manager Sowell informed the Board that conversations were held with City leadership, and it would take some time to identify the appropriate steps needed to start the backup system.

23-0901 Approval of 2024 Board of County Commissioners' Meeting Schedule

Monica Wallace, Clerk to the Board agreed with Commissioners to move the approval of the 2024 meeting schedule to the December 11th Regular Session due to waiting on two (2) additional dates from the school board and to include Passover dates.

There were no questions regarding the items below:

23-0808 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 24BCC00058 Public Health to Recognize \$1,200 from the National Network of Public Health Institutes for the Racial Justice Competency Model (RJCM) Pilot Program

23-0809 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 24BCC00057 Public Health to Recognize \$100,000 from the National Association of County and City Officials for Covid-19 Education and Access

23-0845 Approval of McKim & Creed Contract Amendment for the Utilities Division for Arc Flash Analysis Services in the Amount of \$10,748 Bringing the Contract Amount from \$94,807 to \$105,555 With a Not to Exceed Amount of \$120,000

23-0851 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 24BCC00034 Public Health to Recognize \$59,743 from Guilford County's Division of Public Health for Staff Development and Training

23-0854 Approval of Relocation of Abandoned “Emory Cemetery”

23-0870 Approve Alternate Appointment to the 2023 Board of Equalization and Review

23-0871 Approval of Contract with Woolpert, Inc. (dba Data Cloud Solutions) in the amount of \$88,175.00 for Mobile Assessor product to transition to appraisal field process to paperless environment.

23-0872 Delegation of Authority to the Tax Assessor to Grant Individual Extensions for the Listing of 2024 Business Personal Property

23-0885 Recognition of a rebate in the amount of \$49,950.00 from the Duke Energy NC Solar Rebate Program for the New Durham County Youth Home Project

Discussion Items

23-0884 Presentation on the RTP Social District

The Board was requested to receive a presentation on the proposed Social District for the Research Triangle Park (RTP). Hub RTP, the new downtown for the park, was pursuing a social district through Durham County. The Hub RTP campus sat on 100 acres of land on the corner of Davis Drive and Highway 54 within Durham County limits. The west side of the campus housed office space, lab space, coworking and Boxyard RTP. The east side, currently under construction, would feature additional office and lab space, retail, food and beverage, a hotel, and for the first time in the Park’s history, multi-family residential.

RTP representatives received feedback and guidance from the Board during the work sessions and this item would be returned to the Board for formal consideration at an upcoming regular meeting. Counties were permitted, through the General Statutes of North Carolina, to establish social districts per GS 18B-300.1(c) and GS 153A-145.9.

Amanda Ronan, Senior Director of Placemaking at RTP, shared the timeline for board action was projected for quarter three (3) of 2024 with any outstanding items to be gathered and shared beforehand.

Discussions were held regarding waste reduction surrounding RTP’s social district. Ms. Ronan stated options were currently not discussed; however, all cups were to be disposable upon opening. She continued to say the Town of Cary utilized recycled cup materials, which the County could also use if deemed necessary.

23-0701 Presentation on the RTP 3.0 Project

The Board was requested to receive a presentation by representatives of the Research Triangle Foundation on the future of the Research Triangle Park. During the next year, RTP would welcome residents into the park for the first time in its history as part of the HUB mixed-use redevelopment. Once completed, HUB would offer residential, commercial, and retail space within 100 acres in the heart of RTP. This new setting would feature walkability, sustainability, and connectivity. RTF envisioned working with its various property owners to re-create, where

appropriate, a HUB-like environment throughout RTP over the course of the next 50 years, with a focus on meeting the residential needs of our growing region, growing the economic base and employment opportunities in Durham and Wake Counties, and promoting sustainability through enhanced environmental protections.

Scott Levitan, President and CEO of the Research Triangle Foundation (RTF) stated input was received from the counties and companies to assist with the creation of the plan and due to RTF not owning majority of the land, development would be market driven with the need for housing in the triangle region as priority. Linda Hall, Executive Vice President, and COO of RTF added the Urban Research Service District (USRD) helped with the development process, with funds being used to create magnetic tips to within public entities.

Mr. Levitan answered questions pertaining to the purchase amount of land bought and if any guidelines were prewritten. He stated the cost of the 400-acre land was around \$4 million and was done in two (2) batches – with \$2 million being from raised funds from residents of the Triangle and the other \$2 million from a loan from the Governor of North Carolina. Travis Clayton, RTF Senior Director of Planning added a proposal to rewrite the covenants to create new structures to establish prewritten guidelines with the goal to be as predictable as possible, i.e. mixed-use campus, however thresholds were being worked out.

23-0886 ARPA Update

The Board requested to receive an update on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The American Rescue Plan delivered \$350 billion for state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. Durham County received \$62,445,275. ARPA funds supported several priorities including a public health response due to COVID-19, addressed negative economic impacts, replaced public sector revenue loss, and funded premium pay for essential workers. Funding use also addressed water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure and other priorities as identified in the US Treasury Final rule. Funding must be encumbered by 2024, with all invoices paid by 2026.

Claudia Hager, Deputy County Manager, responded to questions about supporting home security efforts. She stated \$2 million was allocated and staff would come back to the Board in January with additional information due to a discussion being held on home security with the Joint City-County Planning Department in upcoming weeks. Manager Sowell added the County did not want to submit any proposals until this discussion was held.

Commissioner Jacobs encouraged staff to speak with Justice Services Director, Roshanna Parker for reentry housing for women.

The Board asked if nonprofits contracts were underway and if there would be funding for the arts. Ms. Hager responded as contracts were being finalized, staff were revisiting the scope of work and refining the RFP to identify targeted entities and their outcomes. She continued to say discussions were held regarding funding for the arts and a proposed Joint Interlocal Agreement was being planned.

23-0903 Commissioner Comments

The Board was requested to allow each Commissioner six (6) minutes to report on conferences or make comments regarding issues that may be of interest or concern to the Board.

Commissioner Carter expressed excitement for the future of the current Board and looked forward to working together in the new year.

Commissioner Jacobs discussed the Familiar Face’s Initiative – stating one (1) of their committees focused on collaborative efforts to mitigate housing problems. She also went to Burke County for the NCACC Presidential Initiative “*One More Thing*” meeting where the focus was on how Counties could reduce overdoses and how to address the stigma surrounding mental illness, substance abuse and how citizens could receive treatment.

Vice-Chair Burns asked if the Board could sign a proclamation for Mayor O’Neal’s historic election and the work she did for the City of Durham. The Board was in agreement.

Adjournment

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter, to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Shaunecie Wardrick
Administrative Assistant