

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

Monday, June 10, 2024

7:00 P.M. Regular Session

MINUTES

Place: Commissioners' Chambers, Second Floor, Durham County Government Administrative Complex, 200 East Main Street, Durham, North Carolina

Present: Chair Nida Allam, Vice Chair Nimasheena Burns and Commissioners Heidi Carter, Brenda Howerton and Wendy Jacobs

Presider: Chair Nida Allam

Zoom Hybrid
Participants: 10

Closed Session – 5:00 PM

The Board requested to adjourn to Closed Session for the following:

- 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 Howerton moved, seconded by Vice Chair Burns to adjourn into Closed Session.

The motion carried unanimously.

Reconvene to Open Session

Chair Allam stated the Board met in closed session and provided direction to staff.

Regular Session – 7:00 PM

Opening of Regular Session - Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Adjustments

Chair Allam announced that there were no agenda adjustments.

Announcements

Monica Wallace, Clerk to the Board read the following announcements:

1. **Coming 2025** – Renegade, located in Downtown Durham is the new up and coming urban living community located at 300 E. Main Street. Interested resident are asked to visit the website www.renegadedurham.com to complete a request form for more information.
2. **Innovate Durham Demo Day** – Everyone is invited to learn more about the results from four startups that recently tested their new technology with Durham County and the City of Durham’s governments at 2024 Innovate Durham Demo Day. This year’s event is Thursday, June 13, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Hayti Heritage Center, 804 Fayetteville Street. Register for free here: <https://events.humanitix.com/innovate-durham-demo-day>.
3. **What’s the 411: Besides food, what other things raise my sugar?** – In another episode of What’s the 411 from the Durham County Department of Public Health, we talk about topics related to diabetes, we will have Duke Endocrinologist Dr. Bryan Batch, talk about things that affect blood sugar-hormones and other conditions such as pain, stress, etc. Free session. On Tuesday, June 18 from 6 to 7 p.m. via Zoom. Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZIkdu2gpzMtE9XhKKs4pEhB7TbF5VokLoc2>.
4. **Juneteenth Holiday Impacts Services** – Most Durham County Government offices will be closed in recognition of the Juneteenth Holiday on Wednesday, June 19, 2024. All offices will reopen with normal business hours on Thursday, June 20. To read about impacts to specific services, read here: <https://www.dconc.gov/Home/Components/News/News/10135>.
5. **Durham Refugee Day on June 29** – Come and celebrate Durham’s refugee and immigrant communities at Durham Refugee Day 2024 at Durham Central Park on Saturday, June 29 from 3 to 6 p.m. Durham Refugee Day is a community-wide event that celebrates the contributions and cultures of our refugee and immigrant neighbors and provides an opportunity to stand in solidarity with these communities. This is a FREE family-friendly event with live music, community education booths, activities for kids, and food vendors from around the world! Learn more at <https://durhamrefugeeday.com/>.
6. **Davis Appears on Latest “In Touch with Durham County”** – The latest edition of the Durham County Public Information Office’s “In Touch with Durham County” show for June 2024 features a full episode with Durham County Register of Deeds Sharon A. Davis. Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/iBrSi3E9vDY>.
7. **DCo Library Summer Reading Program** – Summer is here, and with it comes the National Summer Reading Program. This year's theme is Adventure Begins at Your Library. Throughout the month of June, each Durham County Library location will hold a Summer Reading kickoff celebration. Be sure to stop by your library and pick up your reading tracker and stock up on books! Learn more at www.DurhamCountyLibrary.org.
8. **Durham Rezoning Explorer** – Find active zoning and annexation projects and share your input. Community members can navigate to areas of Durham on this Durham City-County Planning interactive map, and share their input with staff, applicants, and governing bodies on current rezoning and annexation proposals submitted by applicants. This input may be used to inform the

project itself, staff analysis, and information communicated to the Planning Commission, City Council or Board of County Commissioners. Visit it here: <https://engagedurham.com/>.

Minutes

Vice Chair Jacobs moved, seconded by Vice Chair Burns to approve the May 28, 2024 Regular Session Minutes.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ceremonial Items

24-0306 Award DCo ON THE GO Design Contest Winners Checks for 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place Adults and Youth Artist

Motiryo Keambiroiro, General Services Director recognized and awarded the DCo On the Go Design Contest winners:

Youth

1st Place – Jena Im
2nd Place – Erin Lee
3rd Place – Dahlia Louis

Adults

1st Place – Janice Little
2nd Place – Brandon Hampton
3rd Place – Aaron Overington

The Board thanked the contest winners, County Manager Sowell, Ms. Keambiroiro, the panel of judges and the DCo On the GO team.

24-0355 Resolution – World University Games 2029

Commissioner Howerton read the following resolution:

2029 WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES

WHEREAS, the 2029 World University Games will be held in North Carolina’s University Hub Region in central North Carolina, including in Durham and Durham County July 11-22, 2029, in venues at Duke University, North Carolina Central University, and the Durham Bulls Athletic Park in Downtown Durham; and

WHEREAS, the World University Games are considered the “Olympics” for college and university athletes from around the world, and are the second-largest global Olympic multisport event behind only the Summer Olympics; and

WHEREAS, the World University Games include 10,000 participants from 150 countries representing 600 universities competing in 275 sports competitions in 18 Olympic sports supported by as many as 600,000 spectators; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant public benefit to hosting the Games in Durham County through the utilization of area hotels, restaurants, visitor attractions, and support businesses; as well as from the national and international media coverage by over 1,500 members of the press and the more than 3,000 hours of international broadcast coverage; and

WHEREAS, hosting the World University Games, which economic impact studies have shown to deliver between \$150 to \$370 million in economic impacts to the host region, supports Board goals of building economic strength, bringing diverse jobs, talent, businesses, and visitors to Durham County; and

WHEREAS, the Durham County Board of Commissioners is excited to participate with the other North Carolina World University Games Host Cities and Counties in a City/County WUG2029 Partnership Plan to demonstrate support of the 2029 World University Games through a commitment of \$300,000 to the North Carolina Organizing Committee for the Games beginning with fiscal year 2026-27 and which can be paid in more than one year; and

WHEREAS, the Durham County Board of Commissioners would be pleased to provide other appropriate support to the 2029 World University Games, such as security and safety services, as needed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Durham County Board of Commissioners enthusiastically supports the 2029 World University Games

2029 WORLD UNIVERSITY GAMES

and look forward to hosting the athletes, coaches, media, officials, sport executives, and fans to our community as part of this once-in-a-lifetime event.

This the 10th day of June 2024.

Nida Allam, Chair

Nimasheena Burns, Vice-Chair

Heidi Carter, Commissioner

Brenda Howerton, Commissioner

Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

Hill Carrow, 2029 World University Games Chairman and CEO thanked the Board for the resolution. He stated the games would showcase Durham County to members of the national and international media and a worldwide viewing audience.

The Board thanked Mr. Carrow for including Durham County and for the economic benefit of the games for the region.

24-0322 Introduction of New County Food Security Coordinator, Raina Goldstein Bunnag

Donna Rewalt, County Extension Director introduced Raina Goldstein Bunnag, Food Security Coordinator to the Board. She added Ms. Bunnag previously worked for the Public Health Department and was promoted from within the County.

Ms. Bunnag thanked the Board for the Food Security Coordinator position and stated she was grateful to continue to work for Durham County in the new role. She added she was passionate about food security and looked forward to working with the community.

The Board thanked Ms. Bunnag for accepting the position. They looked forward to her enthusiasm and energy to help with food security in the Durham community.

24-0358 Proclamation – Pride Month June 2024

Commissioner Carter read the following proclamation:

PRIDE MONTH | 2024

- WHEREAS,** the Stonewall Riots, a period of protests and violent clashes with law enforcement in June 1969, is commonly viewed as the origin of the modern gay rights movement in the United States; and
- WHEREAS,** the LGBTQIA+ movement in Durham is rooted in an April 17, 1981 protest in response to the hate motivated assault of four men at the Little River on April 12, 1981 and resulting death of Ronald, “Sonny” Antonvevitch: Durham’s first NC Pride March in 1986 was organized by the Triangle Lesbian and Gay Alliance (TLGA) and Mayor Wib Gulley’s proclamation of Durham’s first anti-discrimination week in 1986 resulted in him being challenged by an unsuccessful recall campaign, and
- WHEREAS,** celebrating Pride Month raises awareness and provides support and advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ community, and is an opportunity to become educated, engage in dialogue, strengthen alliances, and build understanding; and
- WHEREAS,** LGBTQIA+ Americans continue to face discrimination simply for being who they are, and the County of Durham stands with this community in the struggle to ensure equal treatment for all; and
- WHEREAS,** while much progress has been advanced, we know that there is still work to be done to ensure that everyone enjoys the full promise of dignity, protection, equity, and freedom; and
- WHEREAS,** more than 400 anti-LGBTQIA+ bills have been introduced in state legislatures all across the United States since the start of the year, and progressive officials and citizens must speak up to protect LGBTQIA+ rights; and
- WHEREAS,** Durham County Government continuously advocates for protections for all LGBTQIA+ individuals in order to make it clear that there is no place in this progressive community, state or nation for denial of human rights regardless of anyone’s sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; and
- WHEREAS,** Durham County’s Non-Discrimination Ordinance, approved in 2022 by the Board of County Commissioners, provides freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, creed, color, sex, pregnancy, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin or ancestry, marital or familial status, pregnancy, military status, religious belief or non-belief, age, or disability in employment and access to all places of public accommodation.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Nida Allam, Chair and on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim June 2024 as

“PRIDE MONTH”

in Durham County. We call upon Durham County residents to recognize the achievements of the members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and to celebrate and support a culture of inclusiveness and acceptance during this month and every month.

This the 10th day of June 2024

Nida Allam, Chair

Nimasheena Burns, Vice-Chair

Heidi Carter, Commissioner

Brenda Howerton, Commissioner

Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

Brent Lewis, Equitable Well-being Director encouraged residents to attend local events in the Triangle area to celebrate Pride Month with the LGBTQ+ community. He added employees were invited to attend a training and discussion with the LGBTQ+ Center of Durham on June 11th at 1 p.m. at the Human Services Building.

The Board thanked Mr. Lewis for his leadership and inclusiveness towards the community and encouraged residents to support the LGBTQ+ Center of Durham.

24-0359 Proclamation – Juneteenth 2024

Commissioner Burns read the following proclamation:

JUNETEENTH | 2024

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the events of June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger led Union soldiers into Galveston, Texas, bringing news that the Civil War had ended and that the Emancipation Proclamation had declared all enslaved people free nearly two and a half years earlier; and

WHEREAS, the Emancipation Proclamation changed the legal status under federal law of nearly 3.5 million enslaved Black and African Americans and the subsequent 13th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America abolished slavery and involuntary servitude; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth acknowledges the considerable lapse over a two-year period, from 1863 to 1865, when enslaved Black and African Americans remained in bondage and unaware of the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln that recognized and maintained the freedom of slaves in the United States.

WHEREAS, the celebration of Juneteenth is believed to be the oldest Black and African American holiday observance in our nation, and takes place annually throughout Durham, North Carolina and the Nation—often consisting of readings of the Emancipation Proclamation, prayer and worship services, family gatherings, cultural performances, educational activities, community service events, ceremonial observances and more; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, during the 105th United States Congress, House Joint Resolution 56 and Senate Joint Resolution 11 were passed, officially recognizing Juneteenth Independence Day; on August 23, 2007, Juneteenth National Freedom Day was recognized by the State of North Carolina; and Juneteenth has been celebrated in Durham, North Carolina since 1933; and

WHEREAS, as July 4, 1776, represents the birth of the United States of America and commemorates the United States’ independence from British rule, it did not offer independence and freedom to enslaved people; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is a stark reminder of the promises of liberation for Black and African Americans in the 21st century; currently our nation and indeed our Durham community is experiencing racial injustices and inequities at a record pace, demonstrating that despite great successes and achievements, Black and African Americans continue to bear the pain and burden of systemic racism and disparate treatment at every turn; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is also known as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Cel-Liberation and Juneteenth Independence Day and Juneteenth augments the nation’s promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth commemorates the strength and resolve of Black and African Americans throughout our history and serves as an opportunity to celebrate the rich and numerous contributions of Black and African Americans to the Durham community, and the United States, and Juneteenth teaches our youth the importance of honoring Black and African American history and the impact of the institution of Chattel Slavery; and

WHEREAS, an official Juneteenth holiday signals that Durham County is committed to doing the work to identify and improve policies and processes that will improve access to opportunities for all employees and work to eliminate any vestiges of unequal treatment that exist in this organization.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Nida Allam, Chair and on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim June 19, 2024, as

“JUNETEENTH”

in Durham County, North Carolina

This the 10th day of June 2024.

Nida Allam, Chair

Nimasheena Burns, Vice-Chair

Heidi Carter, Commissioner

Brenda Howerton, Commissioner

Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

Brent Lewis, Equitable Well-being Director thanked the Board for adding Juneteenth as a paid holiday for the County. He invited the community to attend the 19th Annual NC Juneteenth Celebration on June 15th from 1 p.m. – 8 p.m. at North Carolina Central University.

The Board thanked Mr. Lewis for the proclamation and acknowledged Durham County recognized Juneteenth as a holiday before the State recognized it as a holiday.

Consent Agenda

Chair Allam asked the Board if they requested to pull or comment on any items on the Consent Agenda. Hearing none, Chair Allam entertained a motion for approval.

Vice Chair Burns moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

24-0290 Approval of the FY25 Durham Annual Transit Work Program Global Operating and Capital Agreements

24-0291 Approval to Enter into a Contract with Elections Systems and Software Maintenance, Firmware, and Software

24-0294 Approval to Grant a Permanent Utility Easement to Duke Energy and Charter Communications at 406 Rigsbee Ave. and 215 W. Seminary Ave

24-0295 Approval to Grant of a Permanent Sign Easement to the City of Durham for a Historical Marker at the Stanford L. Warren Branch Library at 1201 Fayetteville Street

24-0300 Approval to Amend a Contract with EPlus Technology, Inc. in the Amount of \$13,583.52 (for a new total of \$52,445.20) for Contracted IT Consulting Support for the County's Virtual Private Network (VPN), Using Current CIP Project Funds

24-0301 Approval to Enter a Contract with NWN in the Amount of \$182,431.80 to Manage and Support Durham County's Information Technology ACI (Application Centric Infrastructure) Environment

*24-0315 Budget Ordinance Amendment No.24BCC00106 Transferring Available Unspent Funds Among Departments and Functional Areas to Support Personnel Expenses through the End of Fiscal Year 2023-24. No Additional Funding is being Requested

24-0318 Review of the Draft Grant Agreement between Durham County and the Federal Railroad Administration for the Durham Rail-crossing Engagement, Planning, and Innovative Revitalization (Durham REPAIR) Study

*24-0319 Approval of Capital Project Amendment No.24CPA00029 Appropriating \$5,000,000 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/Engineering Design Services with O'Brien Atkins Associates for the EOC & Backup 911/Sheriff's Call Center Project for a fee of \$4,820,510

*24-0321 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 24BCC000104 Cooperative Extension to recognize \$241,500 from the Duke Endowment to Enhance Parenting Skills and Support Services for Fathers by

Offering a Culturally Adapted Fatherhood Program through Extension’s Welcome Baby program to May 31, 2027

24-0323 Approval of the Maintenance Contract with Granicus, LLC

24-0324 Approval to Enter into a Contract with SHI International in the Amount of \$106,869.91 to Renew Smarsh Text Archiving Licenses

24-0339 Appoint Voting Delegate - 2024 National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference

Consent Agenda Item #24-0315

**Durham County, North Carolina
2023-2024 Budget Ordinance
Amendment Number 24BCC00106**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF DURHAM COUNTY that the 2023-2024 budget ordinance is hereby amended to reflect budget adjustments.

<u>Fund Name</u>	<u>Current Budget</u>	<u>Increase/Decrease</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>			
<u>Expenditure</u>			
General Government	\$192,747,307.31	(\$350,334.00)	\$192,396,973.31
Public Safety	\$87,271,049.21	\$275,516.00	\$87,546,565.21
Transportation	\$2,012,664.06	(\$7,518.00)	\$2,005,146.06
Environmental Protection	\$8,515,257.58	\$177,605.00	\$8,692,862.58
Economic and Physical Development	\$9,889,106.87	\$178,913.00	\$10,068,019.87
Human Services	\$131,318,029.85	\$203,647.00	\$131,521,676.85
Education	\$208,841,980.98	(\$44,236.00)	\$208,797,744.98
Cultural and Recreation	\$17,364,738.71	(\$433,593.00)	\$16,931,145.71

All ordinances and portions of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Approved June 10, 2024

Consent Agenda Item #24-0319

**Durham County, North Carolina
FY 2023-2024 Capital Project
Amendment Number 24CPA-29**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF DURHAM COUNTY:
That the FY 2023-24 budget ordinance is hereby amended to reflect budget adjustments.

Project #	Project Name	Current Budget	Increase / Decrease	Updated Budget
47302635DC158	Emergency Operation Center (EOC) & Backup 911/DSO Call Center Project	\$600,000.00	\$5,000,000.00	\$5,600,000.00

All capital projects in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Approved June 10, 2024

Consent Agenda Item #24-0321

**Durham County, North Carolina
2023-2024 Budget Ordinance
Amendment Number 2BCC00104**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF DURHAM COUNTY that the 2023-2024 budget ordinance is hereby amended to reflect budget adjustments.

<u>Fund Name</u>	<u>Current Budget</u>	<u>Increase/Decrease</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>			
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Economic and Physical Development	\$9,647,606.87	\$241,500.00	\$9,889,106.87
<u>Revenue</u>			
Contributions and Donations	\$273,120.00	\$241,500.00	\$514,620.00

All ordinances and portions of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Approved June 10, 2024

Other Business

24-0352 Adoption of the FY 2024-25 Budget Ordinance

Dr. Kimberly Sowell, County Manager thanked the Board for their commitment. She also thanked Keith Lane, Budget Director, the Budget Department staff, Deputy County Managers and Assistant County Managers for their assistance with the budget.

The following citizens requested to speak on the budget prior to approval:

DeWarren Langley, Citizen

Mr. Langley asked the Board to approve the \$25,000 funds requested for the Charles Hamilton Houston Foundation Program.

Waldo Fenner, Citizen

Mr. Fenner stated the elderly, low-income and disabled populations would be affected by the increase in taxes to support Durham Public Schools budget, solar panels and bonds.

Heidi Jo Hetland, Citizen

Ms. Jo Hetland asked the Board to support funding Durham Public Schools' full budget request.

Vice Chair Burns moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter to approve the FY2024-25 Budget Ordinance.

Ayes: Chair Allam, Vice Chair Burns, Commissioner Carter and Jacobs

Nays: Commissioner Howerton

The motion carried.

24-0361 Commissioner Comments

Chair Allam read the following statement:

“Tonight, is a historic moment in Durham County.

We celebrate the passage of a \$966 million budget that speaks volumes about our collective commitment to progress, equity, and community welfare. Before we delve into the specifics of this budget, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to every single county employee who has played a role in shaping this monumental decision.

To our brilliant County Manager, Dr. Kimberly Sowell, who leads with true vision: thank you.

To our tireless county staff, who have worked day and night under the guidance of Deputy County Manager Claudia Hager, thank you. Your dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to service have made this achievement possible.

To our budget staff in particular: Keith Lane, David Ades, Heather Walker, Shannon Wright, Jonathan Yeomans, and Justin Kee: We owe you a debt of gratitude for your perseverance and professionalism, especially in navigating the challenges of this difficult budget year. When you have a moment, please sign the thank you card in the lobby for our incredible budget staff, and feel free to help yourself to a cupcake.

I also want to express my appreciation to all department heads who embraced the charge to tighten our belts and find creative solutions in the face of adversity. Your leadership and stewardship have been instrumental in ensuring that we balance fiscal responsibility with our duty to meet the needs of our community.

To all Durham County employees, your understanding and support during this time of more modest pay increases are deeply appreciated. Your resilience and dedication to public service are the bedrock of our county's success.

Let me be real for a moment: This budget did not come easily. Faced with lower than usual revenue, our team got creative. When the state failed its residents, the county stepped up and delivered. And because of the hard work and persistence of every person I just mentioned, in addition to hundreds of community advocates who raised their voices to weigh in... this budget is a historic achievement. It allocates more than \$208 million to Durham Public Schools—more funding than any budget in county history.

It prioritizes education, employee compensation, social services, community prosperity, public safety, and infrastructure improvements—the pillars upon which a thriving community stands.

In the realm of education, we are investing those hundreds of millions of dollars in the future of our children, increasing funding for Durham Public Schools and Pre-K programs. We recognize that education is the great equalizer and the foundation of a prosperous society.

Our commitment to personnel is evident through compensation support and the careful allocation of limited new full-time positions. We understand that our employees are our most valuable asset, and we are dedicated to ensuring their well-being and professional development.

In the realm of social services, we are addressing pressing issues such as Medicaid Transformation and eviction diversion. We refuse to turn a blind eye to the challenges facing our most vulnerable residents, and we are allocating a total of \$112 million to human services, accordingly.

Community prosperity is fostered through support for initiatives like Cooperative Extension and Durham Technical Community College, which make up \$15 million of the budget. We believe in creating opportunities for all members of our community to thrive and succeed.

Public safety remains paramount, with nearly \$100 million in funding allocated for the Sheriff's Office and Fire Departments. We are committed to keeping our communities safe and secure for all residents.

Last but not least, our investment in infrastructure—including almost \$15 million for transportation projects and environmental protection combined—lays the groundwork for sustainable growth and development.

This budget is more than just numbers on a spreadsheet; it reflects our shared values and priorities as Durhamites. It is a testament to our unwavering commitment to taking care of ALL our residents, regardless of their background or circumstances. And as the mother of two future Durham Public

School students, I take particular and personal pride in what it accomplishes for our children and the county they will inherit.

As we look ahead, we can all agree: this budget is only the beginning. It doesn't fund every single thing we hoped it would—or everything Durham County needs and deserves.

Our board is providing half the funding for EC/ELL supplements & we are optimistic about the conversations ahead to secure that funding. And more broadly, we see the budget itself as a first step—a promise to do more, listen better, and act quickly in response to the needs of all our residents. What better final budget vote for this historic Board to take, than to act on our values together?

Today and tomorrow, let us carry the spirit of collaboration, compassion, and progress that define this Board's legacy. Together, we will continue to build a brighter future for Durham County—one that is inclusive, resilient, and prosperous for generations to come.

Thank you."

Commissioner Carter read the following statement:

"I'd like to first thank many people for an energized and productive budget session. Manager Sowell, Deputy Manager Hager, Budget Director and Assistant Director Keith Lane and David Ades and the entire budget team: Justin, Shannon, Jonathan and Heather. I'd like to thank all our departments for their support. Thanks to all the teachers, educators, support workers, parents and DAE leaders and

members. And thanks to the DPS Interim Superintendent and staff and to our colleagues on the Board of Education...

I also want to thank each of my commissioner colleagues for the hard work we've done together to try and reach consensus within challenging budget constraints.

I want to acknowledge how very real and pressing Commissioner Howerton's concerns are (that she just expressed in her comments) about the potential impact of this tax increase on our residents who have fixed or limited incomes. This is a sincere, legitimate worry that we all have grappled with. I hope we have reached an appropriate balance in our attempt to meet the pressure of rising costs and increased demands for services in the face of reduced rates of increase in natural revenue growth and continued underfunding by the state.

I'm focusing my comments on funding for our schools (with the limited time), the area of largest funding increase...

I think we are making this unprecedented, momentous investment in DPS because when our community comes together inside and around our schools, and when our schools have the resources they need, our schools will be strong. And when our schools are strong:

- Our children will flourish socially and academically*
- More economic opportunities will be available to our well-educated and talented workforce*
- Our communities will be healthier and safer*
- Our quality of life will be better*
- And our general welfare will be enhanced...whether we have children in the system or not*

...and these are the sorts of things, with widespread mutual benefits, that it makes sense to raise taxes for...

That is why I support what is essentially full funding for the Board of Education's requested budget goals. We are slightly shy of the \$27.7 million requested, but through working with the BOE and Interim Superintendent Moore, we've learned the amount needed from the County for the difficult-to-fill EC and ELL positions has dropped about 50%. This budget includes the remaining amount needed for these salary increases. We expect and trust that with this budget's increase in local funding from the County for current expenses and capital that the DPS BOE will move forward with full implementation of all requested salary supplements and increases to recruit, retain, and respect the very best educators and support staff for our Durham children. Hooray!

Our public schools must have our support in these most trying times for North Carolina education policy AND at a point of local crisis crescendo. The American public education system is our best hope for shared prosperity, social mobility and social cohesion in our society. Our public schools are the place where we build community and shared understanding across our many differences as people. I believe in public education; I believe in our DPS educators, students and families; I believe in the elected members of our Board of Education.

It is for these reasons and more that I support this budget."

Commissioner Howerton read the following statement:

“Today, I stand with my colleagues and members of Durham’s Board of Education in gratitude for the men and women who teach, counsel, coach, clean, cook, drive, protect and nurture our children who receive public education. Durham is a community with escalating housing costs and other needs impacting the cost of living. It is my desire that every person school employed by DPS receive compensation and benefits in line with their work in our education system.

My responsibility as a member of the board of commissioners is to weigh the cost related to managing the entirety of our county budget. Each year since I took office sixteen years ago, I diligently consider all matters regarding Durham’s human service’s needs. We, as members of this board, consider the compensation of all county employees while measuring the needs of public safety, health and mental health, our community college, proposals from nonprofit organizations, our library system and other items reflected in our budget.

As a county commissioner, it’s been my pleasure to listen to all of our citizens. I hear increased concern regarding the impact of property tax increases while we continue to grow beyond our ability to keep pace with population growth.

I hear immense concern from residents regarding the proposed budget increase for Durham Public Schools. I hear the perception of mismanagement of funds during the most recent budget cycle. As a commissioner, I’ve learned to force tough conversations regarding system accountability. This proposed increase, on top of the increase during the previous years, deserves a more reasoned discussion related to accountability.

The honoring and support of teachers, administrators and classified workers is worthy of consideration. It is also worth noting the impact of tax increases on the most vulnerable citizens. It is my contention that property tax increases by both the city and county during the same period is too much to ask of our citizens. Given the potential impact on our most vulnerable citizens, I suggest an extensive external audit of DPS spending. There are significant questions still lingering after the crisis created due to miscommunication related to raises for DPS employees. Our role in supporting DPS should never involve repairing perceived errors without considering questions involving accountability.

I’ve heard reasoned fear that teachers may leave Durham due to no increase in pay. I hear those concerns. I also hear the concerns of parents who have chosen to consider alternatives to Durham’s public education system. We commissioners are forced to consider the plea of parents while honoring the contribution of the people doing their best to improve Durham’s education system. Significant progress has been made toward reducing the achievement gap. Plans are underway for capital improvements. This board pressed for bonds to help repair and build schools to offset decades of decay. Yes, there is good work done in our school system, and we continue to support our public schools.

I’m voting against this budget increase after weighing the impact on senior citizens, low-income citizens, county government employees and our most vulnerable residents. Also, the impact this will have on the county Budget starting next year. The cost is too much, too soon with No Accountability from DPS.”

Commissioner Jacobs read the following statement:

“Tonight, is an historic moment for our community. This budget represents a big win for our children, our teachers and school workers, our parents, and our entire community. We have demonstrated how we can work together, in the face of challenges often outside of our control and find solutions that put our children and families first.

I want to first thank our incredible Durham County staff- County Manager, Kimberly Sowell, Budget Director, Keith Lane, Deputy County Manager Claudia Hager and each of their teams. It is due to their knowledge, expertise, hard work and innovative approach to problem solving that we have found a way to meet the current critical needs of Durham Public Schools and minimize the potential impact on our property tax rate. We are providing full funding to increase salaries for classified and certified staff, re-implement masters pay and half of the EC/ELL supplement. We are going beyond what was requested for urgent capital needs. This budget provides \$27,367 million in new funding on top of \$244 million in ongoing current expense, debt service and indirect funding to DPS. I am hopeful that the fiscal and budgetary management, controls and policies being implemented by the BOE and Interim Superintendent will provide any remaining funds needed for the EC/ELL supplement. I also want to thank every Durham County Department head and their staff for stepping up to make sacrifices and do more with less to help us address our current budget challenges and meet the urgent needs of our schools. I want to acknowledge my fellow board members and the hard work we have put into this budget.

I also want to thank our passionate and caring community. I have been inspired during this very difficult process by our parents, students, teachers and school staff who care so deeply about Durham Public Schools and the sacrifice and commitment people in our community are willing to make to ensure our schools thrive and our children can get the education they need and deserve. I want to thank DAE, the Durham Peoples Alliance and every person who sent letters, emails, made calls or came to a meeting during this budget process.

We truly have a beloved community here in Durham.

Budgets are a moral document and reflection of our values. I want to lift up other priorities reflected in this budget. We continue to focus on investing in our children, expanding our funding for Durham PreK to now more than \$9 million including the new Murray Massenburg PreK classrooms. We are supporting our most vulnerable residents struggling with increasing rents raising our Eviction Diversion Rental Assistance funding from \$180,000 to \$780k, an increase of \$600,000 and maintaining our \$750,000 in funding for our Low-Income Homeowner Tax Relief Program. Our only major staffing expansion is in DSS -to provide Medicaid expansion to our residents.

Our public schools are the heart and soul of our community and our democracy. All our children deserve bright futures. Our teachers and school workers deserve to be fairly paid for their expertise and hard work. But the reality is that the budget our board and staff has made possible tonight is not financially and fiscally sustainable for the future. We need everyone in our community to focus on the upcoming election. To vote and get out the vote. We need you to bring the fight for adequate funding for our schools directly to the North Carolina General Assembly.

Tonight, is a moment to celebrate what our community can do collectively when we work together.

I am proud to support this historic budget.

Tomorrow it is time for each of us to get back to work.”

Commissioner Burns announced highlights of the historic FY 2024-2025 adopted budget. She stated the budget reflected the resilience and commitment of Durham residents along with unwavering support and a shared vision for a thriving community.

Closed Session

The Board was requested to adjourn to Closed Session for the following:

- The Board is requested to adjourn into Closed Session to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations; pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4).

Vice Chair Burns moved, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs to adjourn into the Closed Session.

The motion carried unanimously.

Reconvene to Open Session

Chair Allam announced the Board met in Closed Session and provided direction to staff.

Adjournment

Commissioner Howerton moved, seconded by Vice Chair Burns to adjourn the Regular Session meeting at 9:12 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Macio Carlton
Deputy Clerk to the Board